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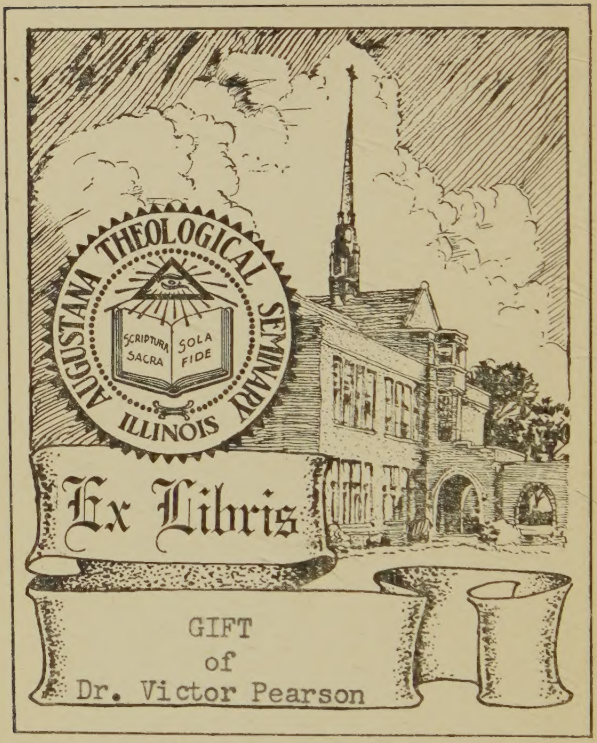
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EVERYDAY LIFE SERIES

Psalms of the Social Life

CLELAND BOYD McAFEE

Author of "The Greatest English Classic," "Mosaic Law in Modern Life," etc.

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CHAPTER I

The Songs of a Thousand Years

The book of the Psalms is the best known book in the Bible. That is because it is the most complete expression of human life in literature. It ranges all moods. No man can seek the expression of any mood without finding terms for it here. From the depths of despair he can cry for help; in rage at injustice, in the pain of betrayal by friends, in doubt of God's goodness, in assurance of his unfailing love, feeling himself wrong or wronged, seeing the world as going to ruin or seeing it as working out a plan of good, wanting inspiration to serve his fellowmen better or wanting refuge from their demands, fearing the future or hoping for it, in depression or in exultation—whatever mood any man cares to express is here. Calvin says: "All griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, and anxieties, in short all those tumultuous agitations wherewith the minds of men are wont to be tossed—the Holy Spirit hath here represented to the life." It is a literature of insight.

DAILY READINGS

First Week, First Day

Bless Jehovah, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless Jehovah, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy desire with good things,
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.
Jehovah executeth righteous acts,
And judgments for all that are oppressed.

—Psalm 103: 1-6.

This is a psalm in the mood of *personal exultation.* It is a mood not brought about by absence of disturbing conditions. Anybody can be exultant when there is no reason for being otherwise. This mood is caused by becoming sure of the goodness that is in the world and in personal life because God is good. A laconic man was asked what is the chief requisite for making a pessimist, and he answered, "A poor memory." It takes a deal of forgetting to feel forsaken in the world. The popular song about counting our blessings suggests how impossible it is to do so. Imagine naming them "one by one"! We may not be able to list them in just the terms of this psalm, we may not have had these experiences at all; but the habit of tracing the blessings of life to their first cause in God is the best way of making this mood of personal exultation permanent. There are men who have a sense of eternal youth, feeling their power renewed constantly like the eagle, which every year, as this psalmist watched him, gained new plumage for his wings in place of the old. And such joy deepens when it is made social and we come to see that God's care covers all who need him, that he has no favorites, that he does injustice to no one. We say that misery loves company; it is not always true. But is it not always true that joy loves company? Is our mood ever worthy until we want the world to have such blessings as we have ourselves?

See Prayer on

First Week, Second Day

Praise ye Jehovah.
Praise, O ye servants of Jehovah,
Praise the name of Jehovah.
Blessed be the name of Jehovah
From this time forth and for evermore.
From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same
Jehovah's name is to be praised.
Jehovah is high above all nations,
And his glory above the heavens.
Who is like unto Jehovah our God,
That hath his seat on high,
That humbleth himself to behold
The things that are in heaven and in the earth?

—Psalm 113: 1-6.

This is an instance of the mood of *national exultation* like many other psalms. Notice the change of pronouns. Yesterday they were all singular number, though extending at the last to all who have similar experiences. Today they are plural. It is a social mood, in which the whole body of the servants of God is included. It is a wide mood also, covering all times and places: from the farthest east where the sun rises, to the farthest west where it sets, there is cause to praise God. The whole world looks bright in such a mood. It is good to be alive. And it is impossible to be narrow at such a time. One cannot claim God or his blessings as special possessions in which others cannot share. God is above all nations. His gifts are for all of them. Yet he is not so high that he is not also near. Some of the great people whom we know are as haughty as they are great. God's greatness is humble also. *We are always in danger of going to one extreme or the other about God. Sometimes we make him so great and far away that we cannot love him. Sometimes we make him so near that we cannot worship him.* He becomes so much the king that he is not the world's burden bearer; or else he becomes so much the burden bearer that he is no longer king. The national thought needs to be kept between the two extremes. But if the social mood is to recognize his true place, it must first be recognized in the personal mood of each of us.

First Week, Third Day

Be merciful unto me, O Lord;
For unto thee do I cry all the day long.
Rejoice the soul of thy servant;
For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. . . .
O God, the proud are risen up against me,
And a company of violent men have sought after my soul, . . .
Show me a token for good,
That they who hate me may see it, and be put to shame,
Because thou, Jehovah, hast helped me, and comforted me.
—Psalm 86: 3, 4, 14, 17.

Today the mood is one of *personal depression.* Most of us know the mood. And the first thing to do when it comes is to find out what caused it. Sometimes it is purely phys-

ical, an overstrain which can be made good by sleep or rest; the world looks better through rested eyes. At other times the mood of depression is caused by something wrong in the life, and there is no cure for it except in diversion, which is cowardly, or in correction. There are bad hours which we have a chance to turn into good ones by being honest with ourselves and putting the disturbing element out of our lives. We only fix ourselves in unworthy ways when we try to change the current of our thought in order to be happy while we keep the wrong. Only a clean life can be permanently a happy one. In the case of this psalm the cause of the depression is in the social environment. The man feels himself out of harmony with it. In a university paper of 1916 was the declaration that on the campus which it represented it was not considered altogether good form to be clean in mouth and life. That was an exaggeration, but most men know that it is hard to be one's best self under some familiar social conditions. The cure for the depression that comes is in keeping alive one's sense of the larger environment where God is the ruling factor. We belong to our social group, but above and beyond that we belong to God.

First Week, Fourth Day

How long, O Jehovah? wilt thou be angry for ever?
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?
Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that know thee not,
And upon the kingdoms that call not upon thy name.
For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his habitation.
Remember not against us the iniquities of our forefathers:
Let thy tender mercies speedily meet us;
For we are brought very low.
Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name;
And deliver us, and forgive our sins, for thy name's sake.
Wherefore should the nations say, Where is their God?
Let the avenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed
Be known among the nations in our sight.

—Psalm 79: 5-10.

Plainly we have here the mood of *national depression*

The whole social group which means most to one seems to be awry. It may be one's fraternity which is running down in caliber and conduct or is being unfairly treated. It may be a whole campus spirit that is changing for the worse, losses of leading men in faculty or student body whose going will take strength out of the institution which it cannot well spare, unjust treatment in intercollegiate relations. Or it may be a community losing its fiber, or a nation going mad after wrong things or imperiled by enemies which it seems unable to resist. Men who keep in right relation to their own social groups will understand the mood. Thoughtful men feel it even more keenly than personal depression. But note the moral cleanness of it. The first thought is of the presence of causes within the group itself. Iniquities cannot be disregarded in a moral order. Honest men do not want them overlooked. If the nation has sinned, if the college has been unfair, if the fraternity has taken an unfair advantage, clean men do not want the moral order to act as though that were not so. But when fair requital has been made, they want relief and victory again. And the reason they want it is not selfish but moral. God and the large values involved in relation to him are concerned in the outcome. It is a great thing when we keep our social group so right that we can ask for its prosperity for the honor of God and when our depression over its failure is rooted in our feeling that moral issues are being confused. We may not personally amount to much, but God amounts to a vast deal.

First Week, Fifth Day

Mine eye wasteth away by reason of affliction:
I have called daily upon thee, O Jehovah;
I have spread forth my hands unto thee.
Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?
Shall they that are deceased arise and praise thee?
Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?
Or thy faithfulness in Destruction?
Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
—Psalm 88: 9-12.

Here is a mood in which *dread of the future predominates.*

It is not sudden, but has evidently been with the writer a long time. He has tried to throw it off but it will not go. Nothing changes the situation. He has prayed day by day, but the case grows worse instead of better. Ahead, everything is dark. There was no help for him in the Christian idea of the future, which is such that Professor William Adams Brown can call his book on the subject, "The Christian Hope." Christ had not yet brought life and immortality to light (II Tim. 1:10), and it was not possible yet to be so triumphant as Paul and to say that whether we wake or sleep we live with Christ (I Thess. 5:10). But there are times even for us who have all that richer hope when it grows dim. There are interests of this life which we want to serve. An old Christian leader used to be asked if he was not eager to go to heaven, and he frankly replied that he was not, because there was so much yet to be done and seen here in the earth. *God surely means us to want to be here and to do our bit in the work of the world.* Prospect of not being able to do it, threat of failing health or powers, hindrances which we cannot control, come over us like a shadow of gloom. It is hard to keep up courage. Calvin thinks the mood of this psalm is inexcusable because we must leave all such things to God, letting him take us or leave us as he thinks best. That latter part is true and yet he must understand the feeling of dread that can come over us. What we need to do is to keep it clear to ourselves that the reason we want a better future is for the sake of the service we can render, not for mere selfish pleasure. It is by that path that God leads us out into renewed courage.

First Week, Sixth Day

All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah;
And thy saints shall bless thee.
They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,
And talk of thy power;
To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,
And the glory of the majesty of his kingdom.
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.
—Psalm 145:10-13.

Here the dominating mood is of *hope for the future,*

specially hope for the social order, the kingdom o the earth. Though the whole book of Psalms is ca... book of praise by its Hebrew name, this is the only psalm which is expressly called one of praise in its title. It had a notable place in Hebrew thought. In the Talmud it is said that every one who repeats this psalm thrice a day may be sure that he is a child of the world to come. It gives two reasons: first, because the psalm is alphabetical and therefore covers the whole range of human language; and secondly, because the psalm celebrates God's care for all his creatures. But actually the psalm has no magic, except in its expressing the confidence which we have the right to feel about the future. Everything ahead looks bright in this mood. Tasks may be difficult, but there will be power for them when it is needed. Evil forces may seem dominant for a time, but it is only seeming. The real conquering forces of the social order belong to God and they are at work in the world. That is the tone of the psalm.

It is characteristic of this mood, as of every mood of joy, that we want to pass it on to others; we want to tell the story of the cause of it. Ruskin speaks of the peculiarity of a great truth, that when one really becomes aware of it he feels an irresistible desire to tell other people about it. *When once we have seen the glory of a kingdom set up in this world that is on its way to conquest, we do not treat it as a secret but as a bit of the best news. The social order is not doomed except as it is bad. A good social order is on the way.* We are sure of it because we are sure of God. We call it a social order; it is his kingdom.

First Week, Seventh Day

Jehovah is my strength and song;
And he is become my salvation.
The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous:
The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.
The right hand of Jehovah is exalted:
The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly. . . .
Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness endureth for ever.

—Psalm 118: 14-16, 28, 29.

Here all the moods of the week blend in a strong *assurance of the fellowship between God and men.* It is right to think of God, not merely in terms of the universe but in terms of human life and need. If we read Tennyson's "Higher Pantheism" in the light of his other writing we have no fear of saying:

"The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?
. . . . . .
Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the fool,
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool.

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?"

God is not the universe, yet the whole universe helps us to know him and to know that we are of concern to him. Notice the four great needs which he supplies constantly in human life. He brings *strength* when men face the big tasks of life or the long pull at the commonplace tasks; he brings *cheer* when men are depressed or heavy hearted, teaching them to sing instead of sigh; he guides men in their search for *truth* and away from the paths of falsehood, giving them a life law by which they may walk; he brings to men *salvation* when there settles down on them the sense of loss and ruin, when moral or social forces too strong for them seem to have them in their grip. All this God is in his fellowship with men.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

The psalms were born out of the actual life of men and were meant to be used in that life. Historical events suggested most of them, though few can be definitely located. The songs themselves came out of hearts that burned in

the presence of events. Professor McFadyen speaks of the genius the Hebrews had "for seeing the universal in the particular." They had that genius, but it does not preclude their having wrought these songs out with pain and effort. It is a mistaken idea that inspiration is a substitute for work. Rather, it is an impetus to work. The Talmud says "a cithern used to hang above David's bed; and when midnight came, the north wind blew among the strings, so that they sounded of themselves; and forthwith he arose and busied himself with the Torah—the law—until the pillar of dawn ascended." So it tries to impress that his songs are the fruit of toil. These psalms are inspired; they show it in the fact that only so could their writers have dealt so soundly and completely with human life. They came out of an earlier period, but they fit all periods.

I

The psalms fit all periods in passing by the merely incidental, and getting down to the abiding elements in a condition. "Personal religion is the same in all ages," as Frederick W. Robertson said; "the deeps of our humanity remain unruffled by the storms that change the surface." The 51st psalm, "written 3000 years ago, might have been written yesterday—describes the vicissitudes of spiritual life in an Englishman as truly as in a Jew." That is characteristic of great thinking. You have heard two men discussing an incident or a problem of common life. One handles it by little details, sees it as an isolated event, without roots in any larger condition; the other deals with it on principle and finds the roots of it in wider phases of life. The method of one is to take a case at a time and devise means of correcting a wrong here and a failure there; the method of the other is to get at the causes and deal with a single situation as part of a whole. Politicians are always concerned to get around this or that obstacle; statesmen are concerned to get principles of national life into action. The psalms take the wide view, without missing any of the value of the narrow view. Recent years have emphasized the importance of the historical elements and background of Scripture, but the value of the psalms depends less upon their dates than does that of other parts of the Bible, because, while they

doubtless rose out of particular historical events and some of their details would be best understood in the light of these events, yet they go far deeper than any events in their meaning. Mrs. Browning says that poets are the only truthtellers left to God, by which she meant simply that they get down under the mere accidents of events to their meaning, which is always permanent. The death of Arthur Hallam was the occasion for writing "In Memoriam," but the application of the poem covers far more than that event. A shepherd boy might have written the 23rd psalm, but what he wrote covers a far wider field than a shepherd's life. The 133rd psalm may have been written to celebrate the coronation of David, but it means a far larger thing than the coming together of divided tribes.

This is one of the reasons why the psalms have such great social value. The social order with which the writers were familiar was widely different from our own. The enemies which they had to meet were not like ours. And it is notable that the particular enemies who may have been in mind are never named. Who were the oppressors (59:1-4), and who were the scoffers who sneered at distress (22:6, 7), and who was the familiar friend who betrayed (41:9; 55:12, 13), are purely matters of detail. We have no way of finding out at this distance. These men are not concerned over petty troubles; they are thinking in terms of principles. The name of the man who betrayed them is not important; the thing that counts is that friendship is betrayed, that fraternity brothers throw one down, that fellow church members turn one out. That is no matter of one time or another; it is a matter of any time. It does not make much difference who sneers at an honest effort to stand up for what one thinks is right (123:3, 4); it is the fact of being sneered at that counts. Whether it is a pious man toiling toward Jerusalem on a pilgrimage, or a young fellow taking a stand against some bad campus custom and being laughed at for it, or a girl practicing her religion in a group that laughs at religion, is only a matter of detail; the thing is the same at the heart of it. The same pluck, the same courage, the same renewal of purpose by keeping God in mind, must get into each case. As Kenyon Cox says about art: "To paint a simple, everyday occurrence, a part of the routine of life, and by one's treatment of it to reveal its deeper implications,

and to make manifest the dignity and romance of the life of which it forms a part—that is what Millet did for the tillers of the soil and what Winslow Homer does for the fisherman and the sailor." The psalmists do it for all the moods of life.

So with all national interests. Great national events always tend to start men singing or praying, and the psalms are both songs and prayers. A war brings victory and songs or defeat and prayer. Both imply a deepened sense of solidarity, a stronger feeling of need for God and for one's fellows. Early in the European war the story was told of the word of a farm toiler in England that he had changed all his thought of his employer since the lads of both of them went to war, because the employer had seemed so much more kind and human. People always draw together in great joy or in great sorrow. The deeper emotions are social. This would be magnified in the case of a people like the Hebrews to whom "the religious unit has been not the individual but the nation." Many psalms which are in personal terms are quite certainly meant nationally. The writers felt for the whole nation. What it suffered, they seemed to suffer. When it conquered, their hearts swelled. They became identified with their social group.

No amount of personal exultation can take the place of that social sense. No man has gotten out of his college training what it could have given him if he has not learned to think of himself as an element in a much larger whole, and to feel pain and joy which strike the whole of which he is part. Being comfortable or being disturbed just on one's own account is natural enough, but never worthy for long at a time. No wonder a religion of service and sacrifice like the one we profess has laid such firm hold on these songs. The Church could dispense with its gospels almost as easily as with the psalms.

II

The psalms are true to life in that few of them are dominated throughout by any one mood. Mountains and valleys, heights and depths, are on the same landscape of the soul. We move on the same level, high or low, for only short journeys. When we say of a man that he is always on the

heights, always joyous, always cheerful, we are saying either a very poor or a very fine thing of him. It is very poor if he is the kind of man who persists in throwing off trouble or difficulty and takes the bright, easy way all the while. The philosophy of life that refuses to admit the presence of things that disturb is not valuable enough to make one a helpful factor in real life. But we say a fine thing if by it we mean that the man has schooled himself to face fairly and yet bravely anything that comes, knowing that only so can he serve the need of the world. That is, a man can shut his eyes and be cheerful, which is cheap; or he can open his eyes and be sure of God and so be cheerful, which is courageous. With most men moods are recurrent as they are in the psalms. Moods of confidence and depression, of trust and of question, of assurance and doubt, come one after the other there just as they do in life.

In some of them the same mood is recurrent. In the 42nd and 43rd psalms, originally one, there is a refrain, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God." It comes not once but three times. The writer's spirit rose, but the old gloom settled down again on him. The man has a peculiar temperament who does not know what that means. Psychologists have a term for it—perseveration, the tendency of a particular phrase or melody to persist in the mind or for a mood to reassert itself in spite of efforts to throw it off. The books generally say that such perseveration is strongest in the feeble-minded, but it appears often in times when a strong mind is jaded. Heroic efforts to cast it off are successful for a time; change of mental direction, introduction of a new line of thought, will help. But sometimes it recurs in spite of such effort. There is no corrective, except a powerful corrective thought on which the mind can dwell, as in these two psalms. Perowne says that the 90th psalm is like the pillar which led Israel through the desert—it is both dark and light. Its darkness comes from looking at men; its light from looking at God. So it is with the psalms that foretell a Messiah; some of their expressions are of the mood which applies to Christ, others are impossible of that application.

III

Two dominating lines in the psalms are those of assurance

of God and of the social group and order. The two unite in the sense of God's law as the final social bond. Society is not a human device or a whim of men. It is part of the plan of God (68:6) and he is concerned with the affairs of men. The longest psalm (119) has the peculiarity that without exception—unless possibly vs. 121, 122—each verse refers in some term to the law or the will of God, claiming personal allegiance to it or promising obedience to it, and basing every word of hope on it. Several of the verses may have national reference (119:23, 161) but many take account of a social group of friends or foes. And the general attitude toward that law is one of clear-cut devotion. There is no dread of it nor wish to escape it. The writers love it (119:97) and delight in it (119:16, 47). Their hope of the social order is bound up in God and not in princes or other men (118:8, 9), and all hope for prosperity is in his blessing (106:4, 5). They explain the movements of history by the relation of the acts of men to the will of God (44:1-3; 78 and 106 throughout). As we shall have occasion to see (Chapter XIII) there are few details of the new social order given, but the broad lines of righteousness and peace and prosperity make the psalms available and inspiring for any man who wants to help toward the better order which the Christian hope expects.

In the light of their utter truth to the human heart and of their expression of its abiding moods, all disputing about particular authors and occasions of writing must be kept secondary. The psalms cover a thousand years of human feeling and desire. Fragments, possibly one psalm entire (90), come to us from the time before David, and several from his own time, the eleventh century before Christ. The latest show signs of the period after the exile and some scholars think a few may have been written in the second century before Christ. Those are important details for critical study of the book, but they have no direct bearing on our purpose in this study. Here are the songs of a thousand years, not issuing in a continuous current through that whole period, but scattered down the way around certain singing periods, as in the time of David, of Hezekiah, of the return from the exile. For the most part they were probably collected for use in the temple described in Ezra 3, a hymnbook for the services of instruction and worship. Like

all hymnbooks, there are many writers and many moods. No one ought to condemn himself if he is not always ready to respond to every psalm and the mood it expresses. There are times for one hymn and times when it would be very much out of place; yet the hymn is true to human need. Life is too complex to be shut down to a few expressions. This great song book has in it some songs which are only once in a while needed, but at those times the songs must be available or the book would fail a seeking spirit.

IV

Perhaps it is only fair to stop for a word about a group of psalms which are sometimes said to have no place in the Christian life. They are called the imprecatory psalms, or psalms of cursing—all or part of psalms 35, 58, 59, 69, 83, 109, 137. Professor McFadyen gathers up the word of most of the writers on the subject in reminding us of these four facts about them: 1. They are not the spiteful expression of personal enmity. 2. It is the cause of God that is at stake; the prayer is that God may be avenged rather than that any personal injury be made good. 3. The men on whom the curses are to fall are guilty of cruelty and immorality; they are downright bad men, who slay the fatherless and widows (94:6), not mere personal enemies with whom the writers have fallen out. 4. Confusion of such wicked men was a necessary postulate of the writers' faith in God. If good men were defeated and the wicked were to triumph without interference, God would then be defeated, and these men had a passion for the moral order. There could be no hope for a sound social order if moral order was not maintained.

To this can be added the question whether it is not possible to become soft in the effort to be sweet. Most of us do not dare use the imprecatory element in the psalms because we cannot trust our spirits. We grow personal and vindictive. In so far as these psalms may have that element, they are not Christian, and they may well be in the book as a revelation of a human mood which is just as real as the best mood of life. But that element need not be marked in them. It is possible for a man to take such high, fine views of the moral order that for the sake of bad men as well as good men he can ask nothing better than its vindication. Even the

bitterest curse of all—"happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock" (137:9)—is at its worst only a return to cruel Babylon of the treatment which it had itself given to others. It is no gratuitous curse. It is a rough plea for the equalizing of the moral order. There is no group of any character which does not have limits on the kind of misconduct it will allow. Any of them will cut off a member who persists in passing that limit. The moral order must surely be as sound as that. There comes a time when it must cut off men who persist in outraging it.

These psalms seem reasonable enough when certain evils come to light. They get their meaning in the social order. The badness of a bad deed is not confined to the man who committed it. The whole group has to share it. As our sense of social unity develops, we find it harder to be patient with a man who wrongs the order and tries to be blithe about it. It makes no possible difference to us personally, but it does make a difference to us morally.

But there is not much of imprecation in the psalms. For the most part they express the moods of men who live a daily life of need and who mean to help where they can to get God's will done, who feel themselves bound up with other lives and look forward to the correction of all kinds of social evils and the triumph of all right social purposes. It is the study of some of these moods and of these social factors as they appear in these songs of a thousand years that concerns us now.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Study the psychology of the fact that all wars or similar strains on the spirit of a nation bring certain songs into popularity. What is the social meaning involved in it?

Value of songs in teaching religious truth. Can you trace the origin of the fundamental things you believe to direct or to indirect teaching? How much have the hymns you have sung contributed to what you believe?

In your observation, is the attitude of men toward evil conditions generally so vigorous as that of the writers of these imprecatory psalms?

CHAPTER II

The Solitary Mood

DAILY READINGS

Second Week, First Day

I cry with my voice unto Jehovah;
With my voice unto Jehovah do I make supplication.
I pour out my complaint before him;
I show before him my trouble.
When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
Thou knewest my path.
In the way wherein I walk
Have they hidden a snare for me.
Look on my right hand and see;
For there is no man that knoweth me:
Refuge hath failed me;
No man careth for my soul. . . .
Bring my soul out of prison,
That I may give thanks unto thy name:
The righteous shall compass me about;
For thou wilt deal bountifully with me.

—Psalm 142: 1-4, 7.

According to the heading of this psalm, it was written in a cave at a time of great distress when David was fleeing from Saul. He felt himself utterly solitary. About the hardest thing a man has to face is that he does not count for anybody. Everybody wants to be of concern to some other people, and it is a dark hour when a man feels that no one really cares what happens to him. It is even darker when he has to admit that those who do think of him are thinking more of themselves and what they can get out of him. It is a bad mood, one in which it is necessary for us to take ourselves firmly in hand. *Even if the facts are as they look to us, it is still true that we do count to God and*

that other people ought to count to us. Is it not possible that some one near us is actually thinking this very same thing about himself? If he is, it is our business to make his thought a mistake by showing in our manner and spirit that we care. The quickest cure for loneliness is the effort to cure a case of it in some one else.

Second Week, Second Day

The sense of things lost out of life often makes for solitariness. To waken one day to the fact that we are not so fine as we used to be in spirit or in life, no matter how much we have advanced in other ways, is depressing to us. This 42nd psalm came from a man who felt himself banished from the things that had once meant most to him. Such a loss may come from the fault of other people or it may be one's own act.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me.
How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holy day.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him
For the help of his countenance.

—Psalm 42: 1-5.

Many a college senior, while he laughs at the crude enthusiasms of the freshman, knows down in his heart that he has lost something good out of his life in the years of his course. He has made great gains, of course, but he has left behind some values which he wishes he could recover. Think over some of the better things that can be lost in college. When the experiences of the past are finer than those of the present, any of us must grow thoughtful about himself. And it is all the more important when we find ourselves

among people without those memories, who are contemptuous about our losses and make light of the higher level from which we have slipped away. *Of one fact we are never to lose hold: it is always possible to face forward again by facing upward. We can challenge our own souls to remember that God still has high levels on which we are to walk; the future under his guidance is to be better than the past, no matter what the present may be.*

Second Week, Third Day

Robert Browning wanted men to remember him as one who had kept sure of God. Here are two experiences which either shake one's assurance of God or deepen it: desertion by those on whom one has depended, and the feeling of suspicion and falsehood in the atmosphere. The Arabs have a saying: "God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers." A better way is to say that God is everywhere and has made mothers to keep us sure of it. Yet even these may fail, and if not these, then others who have been our mainstay. The men on whose cheer and encouragement we have depended fail us; they are busy or they are fallible; but their failure leaves us solitary.

When my father and my mother forsake me,
Then Jehovah will take me up.
Teach me thy way, O Jehovah;
And lead me in a plain path,
Because of mine enemies.
Deliver me not over unto the will of mine adversaries:
For false witnesses are risen up against me,
And such as breathe out cruelty.
I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah
In the land of the living.
Wait for Jehovah:
Be strong, and let thy heart take courage;
Yea, wait thou for Jehovah.

—Psalm 27: 10-14.

Sometimes the loneliness deepens as we find the air charged with suspicion; the very breath of men is cruel. What can we do? *We can keep going without fainting. That is the*

very knack of brave living. Waiting is hard, but we are equal to it. Many things clear up with time and we can hold steady in the expectation of the ruling of God. Perhaps we can learn to talk less about our troubles to other people and more about them to God. This will help to make us feel less solitary.

Second Week, Fourth Day

Oh how great is thy goodness,
Which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,
Which thou hast wrought for them that take refuge in thee,
Before the sons of men!
In the covert of thy presence wilt thou hide them from the plottings of man:
Thou wilt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.
Blessed be Jehovah;
For he hath showed me his marvellous lovingkindness in a strong city.
As for me, I said in my haste,
I am cut off from before thine eyes:
Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications,
When I cried unto thee.

—Psalm 31: 19-22.

That is characteristic of moods of depression: they tend to hasty judgments, to sweeping generalizations of evil. The writer of the 116th psalm said in his haste that all men are liars. In our cooler, clearer moods we know that we are not cut off from before God's eyes and that all men are not liars. When we are depressed, downcast, solitary, we look out badly on the world. At such times we need to guard our judgments with special care. After a defeat in debate or a failure of any sort we are not to allow ourselves to form sweepingly adverse opinions. Indeed, *it is important that any adverse judgment should be deliberate and long considered. The long view is the fair one.* It shows the goodness of God. That is a striking figure in our passage for the day which speaks of his goodness as "laid up" or stored up in supply for them that fear him, but as "wrought" for those who take refuge in him. *God is willing to do a great*

deal for us which he is given no chance to do. He does not promise to keep us today from evil tongues, but to steady our hearts. He may not give us friends at once, but he is sure to be friendly to us himself. Whatever happens to us today, let us see to it that we do not fall into pessimism and adverse judgments about God and our fellow men. "God is not discouraged," and we need not be.

Second Week, Fifth Day

Sing unto God, sing praises to his name:
Cast up a highway for him that rideth through the deserts;
His name is Jehovah; and exult ye before him.
A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows,
Is God in his holy habitation.
God setteth the solitary in families:
He bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity;
But the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

—Psalm 68: 4-6.

This is a bit from a long psalm which it would do us good to read throughout. It moves through many moods from the heights to the depths. The keynote of this little bit and of much else in the psalm is that verse about God setting the solitary in families. The social group is God's plan, not a mere human device. No man can get into the world except in a social group of at least three—himself, his father, and his mother. In this deepest biological sense the solitary are set in families. No man of us has been able to get on as far as we have in life except by the cooperation of social forces. We may *feel* solitary, but we actually are not solitary or we could not exist. God does not mean any man to remain in the solitary mood. He is to find his group. Even in the desert he is to help cast up a highway for God. But highways always mean a social order. Where there are few people the roads are poor; as people increase roads improve. Fine highways mean deepening social consciousness.

It takes the group to get anything done. Chronic rebels always dwell in parched places. Sometimes we pride ourselves on being able to criticize social movements and not being caught in mistaken plans. The fact is we had better be fooled a hundred times than fail to take our places in

the social order which needs us. Pride in the solitary mood is a far worse mistake than occurs in any social plan. *God means us today to get into the movements that belong to our group, curing our solitariness by our service of the whole. Have we the grit to do it, in spite of our mood?*

Second Week, Sixth Day

My soul, wait thou in silence for God only;
For my expectation is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation:
He is my high tower; I shall not be moved.
With God is my salvation and my glory:
The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.
Trust in him at all times, ye people;
Pour out your heart before him:
God is a refuge for us.

—Psalm 62: 5-8.

Here again is that difficult duty of *waiting,* only this time it is to be waiting in silence. Yesterday was the plea to get into the task and do our share. There come times when we cannot do it, though the fault is not our own. We simply have to wait. Some of us realize this only when we are laid aside by sickness or when things get so complicated that there is no end by which we can lay hold to untangle them. It is well for us to remember that there are some people whose whole lives are lived under just such limitations. The deepest dark of the solitary mood often is that nothing better seems in prospect. If there were something to look forward to—! But far as we can see it all looks the same. Most business moves forward on "expectations." So do most lives. When expectation fails, it takes hard thinking to keep courage up.

After all, one of the surest cures for solitariness of a bad sort is getting a sense of bigger and more abiding realities than men can furnish. Napoleon said to his generals, "I beg you, gentlemen, plan by larger maps." Here at hand is the cure for much loneliness. God furnishes the larger environment of the soul. *When we can do the thing that needs to be done, we ought to do it, but when we have to wait, it is not for common human forces to work out their result, it is for God.* "The battle is not yours but Jehovah's."

The only thing that at the last insures stability for the soul, so that it is not moved, is its finding God a tower.

Second Week, Seventh Day

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?
My help cometh from Jehovah,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.
Jehovah is thy keeper:
Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
Jehovah will keep thee from all evil;
He will keep thy soul.
Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth and for evermore.

—Psalm 121.

This is about the pluckiest psalm in the whole collection. Notice the verbs—only one in the past tense, the one that tells that God "made heaven and earth." All the rest are present (five) or future (nine). It closes with the farthest possible look into the future and an exultant assurance of what will be true then. The man who wrote it was not holding steady because of what God had already done, but because of what he was sure God was doing for him at that moment and what he was sure God would be doing for him at the next moment. The argument from the past is a strong one, but it does not take the place of these other assurances. We want the kind of thing that helps us today and will help us tomorrow when we meet conditions which we cannot foresee. We need a "present help" (46:1). One who is "nigh unto all them that call upon him" (145:18; Deut. 4:7).

This assurance helps to hold us steady in complicated experiences. No man on the basis of sheer personal experience can say that he knows that all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28); yet we can all claim the right to say it. We know it on broader grounds

than our little narrow experience; we know it in the nature of the case. Such a God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ can be trusted never to sleep and never to let the forces of the universe ruin those who give themselves to him.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

The solitary mood is not always a bad one, nor one to be too quickly escaped. In so far as it is merely being alone it may have its large values. There are lessons of life that are best learned in the solitary places. Moses met God in the desert and there received his commission to deliver Israel. Jesus went into desert places several times during his ministry for the renewal of the relations with God which were so necessary in his life. Paul went to Arabia after his conversion to get his new point of view cleared and to adjust his thinking to it more fully. It was on the island of Patmos that John had his vision. We are to be pitied when we cannot bear to be alone. Sometimes God cannot get at us because of the throng of men. We have to be still to know that he is God (46:10).

But a set mood of solitariness is not good. If it is forced on us and we feel alone because nothing else is permitted us, that is depressing. If we choose it and are solitary because we have come to like it, that is bad, for it is taking us from the place in the social group which is certainly in God's plan for us. *We are not meant to be solitary, even if we want to be. And we are not meant to be solitary even if we feel we cannot help being so.* There are causes of the mood and cures of it.

I

Solitariness itself is a sense of isolation from the group with a longing for admission to it. It is a sense of lack of fellowship, a feeling of unimportance. Sometimes we rebel over it, blaming others for neglect and indifference, leading us to self-pity, one of our least worthy emotions. And sometimes we count it entirely right that we should be left out, finding the cause in our own deficiencies and failures, leading us to self-depreciation, which makes any appeal to us for effective service peculiarly difficult. Either of those

reactions on the mood of solitariness is bad. The desire to be worth while is inherent. Something is wrong when we come to feel that we are nobody in particular. One of the psalmists spoke of himself as being "forgotten as a dead man out of mind" (31:12). Walking around among men and feeling that way is solitariness of a bad sort. Fellowship is our duty as well as our right. There ought to be something in the social group that calls for us or else something in ourselves that challenges the group to let us in. Being on a college campus and not being in the college life argues fault somewhere. Being in a church with no sense of unity with it proves that somebody is wrong. We are socially constructed, and we can no more take our place in life, indifferent to that fact, than we could take our place as one-handed men when we have two hands, or as tongueless men when we can speak.

The cause may not lie in ourselves but in the failure of others. The 41st psalm and the 55th both tell the story of the depression that came to the writer when he found himself deserted by his "own familiar friend," in whom he had trusted, who had eaten his bread and now had "lifted his heel" against him—as though a college student should find that his own fraternity or his special crowd had played him false or were throwing him down in some important matter. He would feel cut off from all that was familiar to him. The whole experience would challenge the best in him to hold steady and fair minded.

The mood of solitariness is often deepened by memory. Soldiers in foreign service sometimes die of nostalgia, which is not some mysterious disease but simply plain, old fashioned homesickness. There are other soldiers around, there are things to read and games to play, but there is nothing to keep memory from tugging at the heart. College students know what it means to feel that one simply must go home again for very loneliness. The drudgery of the present task makes the former pleasures seem doubly attractive. The writer of the 42nd psalm remembered how he went with the throng and led them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday, and it made him pour out his heart within him. Another writer (143:5) remembered the days of old without so deep a pain of contrast, but still with a feeling of change which troubled

him; while a third (77:5, 10, 11) found in his memory a ground of reassurance. And this is the best cure for the depression of memory. The past carries with it promise. Soldiers and college students alike are cured by using their memories aright as grounds of inspiration and satisfaction. The best of the past would be shamed by failure in the present. The good times of the past would be very cheap times if they have turned out men who cannot stand up to the strain of the present. *We may not lose the sense of solitariness which memory brings, but we can bring into that mood an added sense of steadiness because of memory. We can refuse to let happiness slip into the past tense.*

Jesus told his disciples (John 13:19; 14:29) that he was storing their memories with materials which they would need and could use later when heavier strain came on them. That is the best service memories can bring us. They people our solitude. And it becomes tremendously important what material gets stored in them against the day of solitariness when we shall draw on it for our steadying or our weakening.

There is an ebb and flow of faith. Even while we are saying, "Lord, I believe," we have to go on to say, "Help Thou my unbelief." That has been true of some of the greatest believers. Robert W. Dale of Birmingham wrote some of the finest books of argument for the Christian faith that have been produced for our times, yet he was subject to occasional moods of depression when he felt deserted not by men alone but by God as well, like the psalm writer who said that he was as a man who had no help, whom God remembered no more (88:4-7). It is bad enough to feel deserted by men, but when the mood deepens until God seems to have forgotten as well, the case is worse.

II

And that helps us to think of one of the gravest dangers of the solitary mood—the danger of hasty judgments and unfair generalizations. No man is ever cut off from God, and when he stops coolly to think about it he knows how impossible it is that he should be. He knows that all men could not be liars and yet the social order have any coherency. And yet when we are depressed it is such things that we think. Men have thought themselves into madness at

such times. More frequently still they have become pessimists, taking gloomy views of life. Sometimes we speak of optimism as being blind and say that while we do not want to be pessimists we are "compelled to face the facts." *The truth is that real optimism is open-eyed to God and the facts, while pessimism is open-eyed to only part of the facts.* Facts are cheerless things in many cases; they are to be faced with absolute frankness for all that, the more frankly because they are unpleasant. But we never see foothills right until we see them against the background of the mountains. Getting down so low that the mountains are out of sight makes foothills seem much higher than they are. Getting up where we can see *God and the troublesome facts* puts the facts in right proportion. Nothing else does it.

It is noticeable that all the cases of solitariness in the psalms were cured by one of two things: either a renewed assurance of God, or a firm grip of the will on the life that is still to be lived, no matter what the social group does. Most of us are not equal to the latter way. Henley can thank "whatever gods there be" for his "unconquerable soul," but the trouble with many of us is that our souls are too conquerable. It is good counsel to bid us assert our wills; the trouble is that our wills have weakened under the strain of the things we have been thinking and doing. And yet, no man can feel wholly deserted and solitary who faces his task as the one God has given him, letting the assurance form that the God who gave him the task will see him through it. Confucius was once in danger from an enemy and his followers wondered that he was not anxious; but he said, "As God has not yet put an end to this message, what harm can these people do to me?" It is an early version of man's being immortal till his work is done. But the writer of the 56th psalm said it also: "In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid; what can man do unto me?" (56:11; cf. 118:6). Another writer was thankful that it is the Lord who bears the real burden of his daily task (68:19), while still another knew he could not have held his own unless Jehovah had helped him (94; 17, 18). Long afterward, Paul wrote to the Romans of his confidence regarding any kind of trouble (Rom. 8:31-39), saying that with God for us there can be no one worth thinking of against us.

While we ought to have a sense of other people and their

relation to us, we dare not let them be primary. Relief from solitariness may come to us more directly by our gaining a sense of the larger environment that belongs to us. We do not drift into that wider sense, though we may not realize how we do come to it. Robert Louis Stevenson tells how he came to it, changing his life from idleness and self-concern to service: "I remember a time when I was very idle and lived and profited by that humor. I have no idea why I ceased to be so; yet I scarce believe I have the power to return to it; it is change of age. I made consciously a thousand little efforts, but the determination from which these arose came while I slept and in the way of growth. I have had a thousand skirmishes to keep myself at work on particular mornings, and sometimes the affair was hot; but of that great change of campaign, which decided all this part of my life and turned me from one whose business was to shirk into one whose business was to strive and persevere, it seems to me as though all had been done by some one else. . . . I was never conscious of a struggle, nor registered a vow, nor seemingly had anything personally to do with the matter. I came about like a well handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God." In a letter to his father during a hard and wandering time in Paris, sitting in a café, he wrote of his deepening interest in religion, though altogether as a matter of this world. Much had baffled him: "I am lonely and sick and out of heart. Well, I still hope, I still believe, I still see the good in the inch and cling to it. It is not much perhaps, but it is always something. . . . There is a fine text in the Bible, I don't know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord." (Rom. 8:28.) "Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way and another, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me to be. 'Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for Him." (Life of Stevenson by Balfour, pp. 87, 138.)

So solitariness becomes God's working time in our souls. It does, if we let ourselves grow into a stronger sense of God as the great fact in life. He may not put the materials for gladness in our visible surroundings, but he can put gladness in our hearts, more than men have when their grain and their new wine are increased (4:7). The old

monk declined to receive the apologies of those who had seemed to neglect him, saying, "I have not missed you; I have had God." We do not come to that very early in our experience, but we learn to endure solitariness if we must, because God breaks in on it for us. Only, when he does break in, he inclines us the more to our fellows and the service which our lives can render them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

How much of this mood may be temperamental? In so far as it is so, how far is one responsible for it? What program of correction is possible in such a case?

Make clear how subversive of the social life the solitary mood is. In the cases which you know, does the fault lie with the individual, or with the social conditions under which he lives? Suggest the kind of traits that tend to cut one off from social groups. Why do college societies entirely leave out some students?

CHAPTER III

The Personal Mood

DAILY READINGS

Third Week, First Day

Jehovah is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh,
Even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.
Though a host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear:
Though war should rise against me,
Even then will I be confident.
One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after;
That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of Jehovah,
And to inquire in his temple.
For in the day of trouble he will keep me secretly in his pavilion:
In the covert of his tabernacle will he hide me;
He will lift me up upon a rock.

—Psalm 27: 1-5.

Here the personal mood results in utter fearlessness. There is no hint of desire that trouble may not come upon us, but only confidence as to the feeling we shall have if it does come. It will not break us down. That might be mere bravado or recklessness, which is cheap and poor. But here it is neither of those things. *It is an assurance based not merely on what God can do for us, but on what he is doing in us.* In life tasks we come to a sense of security as to the

future because we feel we are prepared for whatever may come; why not in life itself? An experienced engineer is not afraid of tomorrow's problems; an experienced teacher does not tremble before tomorrow's questions in the classroom; a trained nurse is not fearful about the next case. Why should not a man come to the position of utter fearlessness about the reaction he will make on whatever comes to him in the future? *If he knows that God is working in his life, can he not feel that his resources are unlimited?*

Third Week, Second Day

Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.
—Psalm 23.

This best known psalm in the collection has sometimes been called the nightingale psalm. Dr. van Dyke thinks it is more like the song of a skylark, because it is sung not in the night but out in the blaze of day. Here the mood is strongly personal—no plural pronouns. It brings contentment, but without a hint of strenuousness. Enemies are mentioned, but the writer sees himself eating his daily meal in their presence; not snatching it like soldiers pursued and half famished, but with his table spread while they looked on! The valley of the shadow of death comes to his mind, but he sees himself walking through it fearlessly. Such things are only a foil for his courage. He is in stronger hands than those of his enemies. Under this same shepherd

figure Jesus sounded the same note of perfect confidence when he said (John 10:27-29) that no one is able to snatch out of his own hand and the hand of his Father those who are committed to him. There is a legitimate personal mood which demands action, but there is also a phase of the mood which is almost passive, as it seems to be here. A shepherd asks only docile following and *when we are thinking of God as shepherd we think of ourselves as called to follow and trust him for the outcome. That is only one phase of the fact.* Today let us try that phase of it.

Third Week, Third Day

Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to thy word.
With my whole heart have I sought thee:
Oh let me not wander from thy commandments.
Thy word have I laid up in my heart,
That I might not sin against thee.
Blessed art thou, O Jehovah:
Teach me thy statutes.
With my lips have I declared
All the ordinances of thy mouth.
I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,
As much as in all riches.
I will meditate on thy precepts,
And have respect unto thy ways.
I will delight myself in thy statutes:
I will not forget thy word.

—Psalm 119:9-16.

Now the mood becomes more assertive. Our own wills get active. We become confident, not merely because of what God will do for us and in us, but because of what we will do ourselves by the grace he gives us. A cleansed way is not found in a dream by most of us. The element of the strenuous enters in. Paul urged young Timothy (II Tim. 2:15) to give diligence to show himself the man he ought to be. We have found that there is no upward drift in life. *If we are to have the right to assert ourselves in the presence of the demands of the world, we must earn it.* Only whole-hearted men know the safe personal mood. Half-hearted men always sound hollow notes when they talk of courage.

The mood is not supine. We are not to ask to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease—we would not be carried that way if we asked it; but we are not to ask it. We want our share of the fighting, our share of the struggle. And we are not to take it sullenly, whipped into caution by dread of failure. The note is joyous. *Precautions are not cowardly; rather, they set us free to walk the way of life as self-respecting men should do.*

Third Week, Fourth Day

You never know how much a man's estimate of himself is worth until you know what his ideals are. Granted a low ideal of life, and it is not much to come up to it. The young artist in the story thought himself a good deal of a painter until he saw the Sistine Madonna; then he knew better. The personal mood at its best demands high ideals. Nothing easy will do. Petty views will do for petty men, but nothing cheap will do for strong men. *The only ethics that satisfies us at our best is impractical, super-practical ethics, ethics so fine that we know it is rightly called our duty, but so high that it keeps above us a challenging ideal.* Read over the description of the man who ought to live in a world which God made and maintains, and ask whether any cheap ways of living will do.

The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, even Jacob.

—Psalm 24: 1-6.

The size of our view of the world determines our estimate of our own lives. If this earth is the Lord's, then the men who live in it ought to be men of the right sort. They said

in England that the reason Rugby turned out so many square, downright boys was because Arnold's headship of the school made anything else contemptible. Does not God's headship of the world demand the right kind of character in us men who live in it? And the chief demand is downright honesty; nothing mean or underhanded or selfish or dirty fits in with the scheme of things, if this is God's world. In our best personal moods, we mean to be this right kind of men.

Third Week, Fifth Day

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.
Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
O Jehovah, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!

—Psalm 8: 3-9.

By such thinking the personal mood is saved from one of its chief perils—selfishness. Here it passes into appreciation of humanity. When the mood is at its best, man looks great wherever we see him. We are to suspect ourselves when other men look small to us because we ourselves seem great. *Unless we feel the fundamental greatness of humanity, any sense of our own importance is on the border line of impertinence.* When we are standing by a mountain, the difference between our individual heights at our shortest and our tallest is not worth considering. Whether we are five feet or seven feet tall is a negligible matter at such a time. It is the big view that saves us for the best uses of the personal mood. Asserting ourselves, we are making claims for the humanity that is in us and that we share with others. From one point of view man is small in the universe. Measured by the heavens, the moon, and the stars,

he does not come to much. Removing him would not jar the universe seriously. That is the point of view of some of the physical sciences, a wholly legitimate point of view. It is quantitative; man is so much bulk. But when the qualitative judgment is passed, man becomes the greatest factor in the universe. That means that the real demand made on him is qualitative. If he is to assert himself, it must be in the line of quality. The personal mood that rises from assurance of the value of the race will never hurt, will always help.

Third Week, Sixth Day

O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising;
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether. . . .
Search me, O God, and know my heart:
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

—Psalm 139:1-4, 23, 24.

Thinking of this sort saves the personal mood from another of its serious perils—arrogance. It never tries to bluff. It is not a surface matter, pretending to be what it is not. Mr. Henry Mackay tells that he once showed a shrewd Chinese buyer through his linoleum factory when the inlaid manufactures were just beginning. He explained the difference between this new style, which runs the figure through the fabric, and the old style which stamped it on the surface. The Chinese merchant studied it a moment and then nodded his head understandingly, saying in "pidgin English," "My savey; pattern never die!" The pattern of a good man never dies; it runs all the way through. In this 139th psalm the writer knows there can be no deception in God's sight. *But it is not enough to know that God knows us through and through; we must want Him to know us that way.* There is no serious danger of arrogance when we keep sure of God's knowledge of us. Bluffing our fellows is the simplest thing

in the world. We love to talk about being hard-headed and not easily fooled, but every man has his blind side, and when we find it in other men it is hard not to take advantage of it. Any big talk in which we indulge in the presence of God's through-and-through knowledge of us is likely to be honest talk. We can say, "I am what I am," but we have to go on to say, "by the grace of God."

Third Week, Seventh Day

I said in my haste,
All men are liars.
What shall I render unto Jehovah
For all his benefits toward me?
I will take the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of Jehovah.
I will pay my vows unto Jehovah,
Yea, in the presence of all his people. . . .
In the courts of Jehovah's house,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
Praise ye Jehovah.

—Psalm 116: 11-14, 19.

Here the personal mood renders a helpful service. In presence of a hasty adverse judgment about other people, which might or might not be accurate, the writer asserts his own purpose. Whether all men are liars or not does not really make much difference to personal duty. If they are, then I ought to be an outstanding exception; if they are not, then I ought not to be one either. Standards of duty cannot be picked up in hasty moments. In the healthy personal mood, we know ourselves such debtors to the grace and favor of God that we cannot bother with the faults of others and let them keep us from doing our own duty. After the resurrection of Christ, he was one day talking with his disciples and speaking of the future, which led Peter to ask quite irrelevantly what was to happen to John. Jesus replied, "What is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:22). Whatever happened to John, Peter's duty was plain. It is possible to lose the scent of one's own duty by following the trail of human failings and errors. The habit of minding other people's business too devotedly works against personal correctness.

So the personal mood in this same section demands a positive life. *A hid religion is quite sure to develop into a feeble religion.* Vows that are worth making are not worth hiding. What does this seem to imply about the wisdom of a Christian's joining a church? Do the faults of people in the church affect one's own duty regarding it?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

I

The personal mood has two grave dangers. For one thing, it may become mere arrogance, a boastful self-esteem that is unendurable among honest people. Under that spell a man feels that he overshadows other men: his greatness makes them small. It is the vice of talkative "self-made" men, justifying the cynical remark of one of their critics, that while he admired their architecture, he found them generally erected with the "gabble end toward the street." No man has so made himself that he is not hopelessly in debt to God and his fellowmen for the aid he has received. Get back into the real story of any Josh Bounderby (Dickens, "Hard Times"), and you find services rendered by others which would have made him a better man but for a stubbornness which has helped to thwart their goodness. It was in protest against arrogance that the writer of the 131st psalm declared that his heart was not haughty nor his eyes lofty, for arrogant men have such a high range of vision that they cannot see common men. In the 101st psalm the writer says that he will not suffer him that hath a high look and a proud heart, and that he will destroy a man who privily slanders his neighbor, as arrogance always does by its implications. After long experience David declared (18:27) that God is against the haughty, at least two of the prophets adding to that assurance (Isa. 2:12; Zeph. 3:11). It was just after Nebuchadnezzar had blown a loud horn about "this great Babylon that I have builded," that the hand of God fell on him and he wandered out like a beast in the field, learning the lesson of dependence in the primitive way (Dan. 4:30-33). Whatever virtue there may be in the personal mood, it must be kept from arrogance.

The other imminent danger is that it may become mere

indifference to the group. Most of us strongly object to being called selfish, but it is always possible to justify ourselves in not caring for people in general. The "crowd" has always been a favorite word among young people, and a favorite term of reproach among older people. That is because younger people like to belong to something, while many older people have come to have a sense of personal independence which makes cynical indifference to numbers seem a virtue. The continued struggle over high school fraternities turns on that issue, so far as students are concerned. No one argues very seriously for the abiding value of fraternities at that stage of education, but we all like to belong to a group just then and it seems most important to us that we be not disturbed. Many men never leave that stage, but most do, and if it is left too far behind, the personal mood becomes mere selfishness. Under it we hold ourselves aloof from the group because we are not interested in the group. The writers of the psalms walk always in sight of that danger and do not fall into it. The crowd from which they are compelled to stand aloof in the interest of personal integrity is a matter of constant concern with them. They are not contemptuous even when they condemn. A later study (Chapter V) will suggest how they could stand against their social group and yet not be indifferent to it.

II

The essence of the personal mood is the feeling of our feet under us, no matter how unbalanced men or conditions may be around us. In this mood we share the need of the crowd without its nervousness, the danger of the crowd without its dread, the ambitions of the crowd without its anxiety. Men in this mood do not have their environment changed by it, but they find themselves encouraged with strength in their souls (138:3). They walk in the midst of dangers, but are constantly revived by the help that comes from above, but is felt within them. Read the 91st psalm and see how a man can face a perfect storm of troubles with a sense of being protected. That is the personal mood which leaves a man fit to take his place in the world with a good spirit.

You see it in Joshua and his challenge to Israel to choose

between Jehovah and other gods, but refusing for his own part to wait for their decision. Let them choose as they would, "as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah" (Josh. 24:15). Strong men do not take their color in religion from their environment; they get it from within. Their hearts are fixed (108:1). You see it also in the three friends of Daniel who were brought before the king and required to bow before the image, with the threat that they would be thrown into the furnace if they refused. It did not feeze them: "We have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:16-18). If it be so—but if not; it is all one to these men. Suffering is merely a matter of detail with them. They feel their feet under them and the waves break around them without unsettling them. You see it again when Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:18) and charged not to speak in the name of Christ—which arouses more of their amusement than any other feeling: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." Chrysostom was exiled for his faith. He said, "When driven from the city, I cared nothing for it; but I said to myself, If the empress wishes to banish me, let her banish me; 'the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof,'" so he would be at home wherever he was sent. That is characteristic of the personal mood. It has learned to see conditions without depending on them.

In American history two fine instances of it are familiar. One is the Faneuil Hall meeting which Webster was addressing, the crowd standing, as used to be the custom there. The hall was densely packed and a swaying movement began which seemed uncontrollable and would certainly have injured hundreds of people if it had continued. Webster called out, "Let every man stand firm!" Instantly the swaying stopped. Each man took his own stand, regardless of the crowd. Then Webster exclaimed, "Gentlemen, that is democracy, every man learning to keep his own feet!" The other instance is the fine record made by the Wellesley

students on the morning of their great fire in 1914. After the line was formed and it was found that some names were not answered in the roll-call, the line stood quietly while the search was made for the missing students and teachers, stood quietly until sparks came down the stairways and had to be brushed from dressing gowns, and not a member of it broke ranks nor fainted nor cried out. When the order came for the line to move, the fire was on the floor above, but the line moved steadily, each student keeping control of herself. When it was over, some said it proved the value of fire drills in colleges, and it did, but it proved also the power of young people to keep self-control under test. It was the emergence of the personal mood in a large group. Each was helped by the others, but none could have been held by the others if there had not been something stronger holding each one.

III

Most of us feel too much the pressure of the opinions that surround us. It is part of the new accent on social responsibility; some of it is that accent carried too far. We are not the less individuals with personal responsibility, because we are also in a social group. The idols of the market place, of which Bacon wrote, are not to be worshiped by men with personal characters. Campus ideals have to submit to judgment like any other ideals. Mere chesty opposition to traditions is foolish, of course, and it usually has its reward at the hands of fellow students. But there are few colleges in the land which are not needing a few healthy-minded students who are not blinded by traditional arguments and who will feel their own feet under them and refuse to be swept into nonsense of a bad sort because the current runs that way. It may be impossible to take active and successful steps against traditions that are damaging the real life of the college, but it is always possible to hold one's self free and to do it so that favor is not lost where favor is worth having. There are hoary notions in almost all fields which need nothing so much as to have some one say "Booh" to them; then they would disappear. Are there any traditions or conditions in your community life, which have come to be taken for granted, but which are bad and hurtful,

regarding which you ought to take your own adverse stand and be yourself rather than the crowd which generally you can safely be? If there are and you will face them honestly, you will soon know the difficulties of the personal mood, for you will need to avoid mere stubbornness and love of controversy on the one hand, and mere supine acceptance of bad conditions on the other. *Indeed, in the purely personal mood you may need to see that you cannot hope to change conditions at all; they may seem to you too fixed for alteration; but you refuse to submit yourself to them; you will be yourself and take the consequences without a whimper.*

That last is an important part of it. No whimpering over consequences. These psalmists cry to God, but to no one else, and even to him their cry is rather for strength to stand up to the strain than for praise for themselves. That is the secret of their insistent committing of the whole case to divine inspection, which has appeared in the daily studies of this week. In the latter part of the 139th psalm is a swift and revealing change in thought. For some verses the writer has been speaking strongly against the men who are mistreating him, speaking to God, to be sure, but none the less strongly. Suddenly he turns away from that and remembers that these people are not his main business, concerned as he must always be with them. He turns from them and says, "Search *me*, O God, and know *my* heart; try *me*, and know *my* thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in *me*, and lead *me* in the way everlasting." That is a healthy reversion. The evils of other people impress us greatly at times. We want to serve them if we can, but we need to look after ourselves in order to be fit to serve them.

The same swift turn comes in the 116th psalm. Finding himself hastily declaring that all men are liars, the writer suddenly realizes that he can think too much about "all men," and becomes personal again: "What shall I render unto Jehovah for all his benefits toward *me?*" Here the personal mood has large value in helping us to cast out the beam from our own eyes before we pick the motes from other people's eyes. It is the healthy mood of a man who stands up to his duty, not against other people, not even for them, but just because it is his duty, doing that without criticism of others or else with that criticism soon over. Indeed, it must be over before the spirit is fine. Counting

all men liars and hypocrites because they do not do so well as we are trying to do ourselves is the mean streak in us, and the best way to get away from that mean streak is to ask what our own duty is and get down to doing it.

When Phillips Brooks graduated from Harvard he had one experience of dismal failure as a teacher. Everybody agreed that he had not the qualities of a classroom leader. For some time neither he nor anyone else could decide what qualities he had for any kind of leadership. He had a gloomy six months wandering around Boston, wandering mentally as well as physically, trying to find what his place in life might be. Dr. Allen ("Life of Phillips Brooks," p. 26) tells that he was much impressed with Souvestre's "Attic Philosopher," which he read just then. It is the story of a man who in the midst of the fever, restlessness, and ambition of the times continues to live his humble part in the world without a murmur. He has a small clerkship which keeps him from real distress and he learns not to covet riches nor to dread failure. So for a time Phillips Brooks decided to give up all ambition for himself and take the humblest, lowest lot he could find. When, later, he found that he had a message for his fellows, that spirit of being himself, no matter what the circumstances might be, never departed from him. The same thing is only waiting to be true of any man who will be himself, the self whom God will approve, no matter what conditions challenge him to be anything else.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Work out the difference between this personal mood and the mood of the hermit or the misanthrope. How do you estimate Thoreau and his experiment at Walden Pond?

If you were voting alone on a jury against the other eleven members, how would you defend refusing to surrender to their judgment? How would you defend yielding to their judgment?

Jesus was compelled to stand alone at his trial. Think over the spirit he showed under the circumstances and try to imagine similar conditions in your own life and the spirit which you would be likely to show.

CHAPTER IV

Self in the Social Group

DAILY READINGS

Fourth Week, First Day

Praise ye Jehovah.
Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness endureth for ever.
Who can utter the mighty acts of Jehovah,
Or show forth all his praise?
Blessed are they that keep justice,
And he that doeth righteousness at all times.
Remember me, O Jehovah, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people;
Oh visit me with thy salvation,
That I may see the prosperity of thy chosen,
That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
That I may glory with thine inheritance.

—Psalm 106: 1-5.

Here is the solid foundation for an abiding social order —men who keep justice and do righteousness at all times. Nothing could break down an order whose people lived by that. Think over the things that imperil society today and see if they do not all run back to some form of injustice. For a long time, as our social literature shows, it was felt that the strong had all the rights, but they ought to be generous and favor the weak at certain points. A manufacturer had a right to run his business to suit himself, and his employes could stay with it or leave it, and yet he ought to have charity enough to think of their welfare. We have found that the situation demands much more than that. It is not charity in this cheap sense that society needs; it is justice between man and man, justice which is not stern

but fraternal. The labor problem, taxation, graft, exploitation, and all the rest, will be cleared when we come on a basis of justice in the social order. And it is to help that kind of an order that every man whose heart is right ought to pledge himself. The experiences of such an order he may hope to share—no prosperity for himself that cannot be shared with the chosen of the God of justice and righteousness; no gladness for himself in which the nation does not rejoice; no glory for himself which cannot shine on the inheritance of God. Men with this ambition are needed in every social group.

Fourth Week, Second Day

Men of short views are the bane of the social group. Little businesses can reckon their profits every night; big ones cannot. Men who persist in living by short lengths sneer at pleas for longer ones. They talk about birds in hand versus birds in bushes. Esau took the short view in his famous colloquy with Jacob (Genesis 25:29-34), when he sold his birthright which had only a far value for a mess of pottage which he could eat at once. He also sneered at the long view, saying after a day's hunting that he was about to die, as of course he was not. A bird in the hand is better for today's meal, but two birds in the bush may be worth a vast deal more for one's longer life. Living by the day will do for dire emergencies, but it is poor policy for life as a whole.

Fret not thyself because of evil-doers,
Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness.
For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.
Trust in Jehovah, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on his faithfulness.
Delight thyself also in Jehovah;
And he will give thee the desires of thy heart.
Commit thy way unto Jehovah;
Trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass.
—Psalm 37:1-5.

Evil-doers are proverbially shortlived. They have no deep roots. The second commandment speaks of visiting iniquities

unto the third and fourth generation with good reason; evil runs generations out at about that length. Bad men would soon destroy the social order. Over against the impermanence of evil a thoughtful man must seek to set his own life by connecting himself with God's larger plan. Letting mushrooms shame oaks by their rapid growth would be folly. It is the part of wise men to find the abiding value and press that. Politicians differ from statesmen, the saying goes, in that a politician guides his way by a candle which he carries in his own hand while a statesman guides his way by the stars. Politicians sneer at statesmen as being visionaries, but history is for the statesmen. So is God.

Fourth Week, Third Day

And he will make thy righteousness to go forth as the light,
And thy justice as the noonday.
Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him:
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:
Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil-doing.
For evil-doers shall be cut off;
But those that wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the land. **—Psalm 37: 6-9.**

This is beyond most of us. Yet every social group needs men as steady as this calls us to be. College groups need men who will not stand for dishonest winning of victories because such victories are only pretenses. They may win medals, but they beat the college and they beat the men who take part in them and who know themselves for frauds all the while and are morally unsettled so far that they try to pretend that fraud is the way of the world if you can only get away with it—the excuse of cheap men. The situation calls for sun-clear honesty, of course. Evil does prosper in its way; bad men do bring wicked devices to pass; economic, financial, social frauds do get on. Saying that they do not is mere nonsense or ignorance. In immediate and external returns badness pays about as well as goodness. That is because moral forces work more slowly than economic ones

do. But it is nothing to worry about. The moral forces are the ones that make the final result. If we realize that a man is more important than his business, that what happens to the man is the first thing to look for, then evil has no argument in its favor. Lying, for example, may sell goods today, but it makes a liar out of a man, which is the big thing; and it does not sell goods very long, which is a smaller but valuable thing. God, in the nature of things, cuts off a liar after a while. He begins doing it at once, we see afterwards, but his mills grind more slowly than American financial methods. Only they are also more reliable than those methods. The social group needs men who love the group enough to want it to last and who have sense enough to know that it can last only on a righteous basis.

Fourth Week, Fourth Day

Be not thou afraid when one is made rich,
When the glory of his house is increased:
For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away;
His glory shall not descend after him.
Though while he lived he blessed his soul,
(And men praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself,)
He shall go to the generation of his fathers;
They shall never see the light.
Man that is in honor, and understandeth not,
Is like the beasts that perish.

—Psalm 49: 16-20.

Here are two influences which a man's social group can have on him which he has to watch against. For one thing, it can make him selfish. Men praise thee when thou doest well to thyself. Several cynical sayings involve that: "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost"; "if a man does not care for Number One, no one will care for it"; "the meek inherit the earth—six feet of it to be buried in." *One of our most serious moral problems is to strike the line between commonsense care for ourselves and our own interests, without which we shall not be able to do our share of the world's work, and that selfishness which is so often praised.* Think it out with reference to a student remaining in college when he is needed at home for immediate support —when is he justified and when not? For another thing, the

tendency of the social group is to make the immediate day the important one. What is the explanation of the American saying of its requiring only three generations to pass from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves? How do you explain the exceptions? Is there not something in the methods of life adopted by the generations at just this point that explains it? If the future is allowed to take care of itself, it is quite sure to protect itself against foolish men. College men who talk of letting the future care for itself while they live in college for the college years alone are the same men who afterwards talk of having to unlearn so much they learned in college before they could make a success of life. We must learn to play the long game even though the short one is easier and more attractive.

Fourth Week, Fifth Day

I said, I will take heed to my ways,
That I sin not with my tongue:
I will keep my mouth with a bridle,
While the wicked is before me.
I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good;
And my sorrow was stirred.
My heart was hot within me;
While I was musing the fire burned;
Then spake I with my tongue:
Jehovah, make me to know mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is;
Let me know how frail I am.
Behold, thou hast made my days as handbreadths;
And my life-time is as nothing before thee:
Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.
—Psalm 39: 1-5.

This suggests a salutary element for a man who wants to take his place in the social group. He must recognize the presence in it of adverse elements before which he ought to be cautious. Sometimes men look about a group to see if they dare say a certain thing. That is both bad and good. If they are anxious lest some man too good to hear dirty stories may be about and they want to tell such stories, then they are poor instances. But if they are seeing whether what they are going to say will be understood as they mean it, they are wise. When certain types of men are around, wise men

have to guard their tongues, as this psalmist says. Men who blurt out whatever they think under all conditions, no matter who is about, like to call themselves honest and outspoken; they miss the adjectives; they are foolish and uncontrolled. Half the meaning of anything we ever say is in the hearing of it. There are judgments which will be understood in one group which will be wholly misunderstood in another. Older people cannot always say all that is in their minds when certain younger ones are around, without doing a damage to the social group for which they are responsible. We have to learn to care more for our group than for the sound of our own voices.

Fourth Week, Sixth Day

Jehovah is my portion:
I have said that I would observe thy words.
I entreated thy favor with my whole heart:
Be merciful unto me according to thy word.
I thought on my ways,
And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
I made haste, and delayed not,
To observe thy commandments. . . .
I am a companion of all them that fear thee,
And of them that observe thy precepts.
The earth, O Jehovah, is full of thy lovingkindness:
Teach me thy statutes.

—Psalm 119: 57-60, 63, 64.

The resolution to be one's best self is generally made in a measure of solitude. We face a situation and determine that our duty is thus and so. Then we brace ourselves to take our stand even if we have to do it alone, and many times we have reason to think we will be alone in it. One of our pleasantest surprises is finding that other people are getting ready to do the same thing or have already done it. Sometimes they are merely waiting for a leader, sometimes they have already taken their stand quietly. You have noticed how often in a discussion a motion seems suddenly to crystallize a wholly unsuspected sentiment in a group. You made the motion feeling that it would be defeated at once, but that you must do at least that much to square yourself with your conscience, and you found that most of the group

were thinking the same way, but no one had made the start. Elijah in the desert thought he was the only man left for God in Israel, but he was happily surprised when he learned of a good number like himself whose presence he had not suspected, and also learned of a prophet who would be ready to carry on the enterprise after he himself was dead. Trying to help our group, we are not alone, but companions to all who are trying to do the same thing.

Fourth Week, Seventh Day

Our American Revised Bibles give the 15th psalm a happy title: Description of a Citizen of Zion. It is an account of the Man who Ought to Be.

Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh truth in his heart;
He that slandereth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his friend,
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor:
In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,
But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah;
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
He that putteth not out his money to interest,
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.
—Psalm 15.

Study the eleven elements of character in this citizen of God's world and see that *they are all social.* They have to do with the way in which he gets along with his fellows. To be sure, *they are not surface matters.* Character is an inner matter. Truthful words carry us a long way, but they break down if they are not from the heart. Until we learn to think truthfully, we are not safe in speaking truthfully. We trip up soon or late. *Nor are these traits negative alone.* Reprobates cannot be let alone. Good men cannot get away from despising them. The soft nature that tries to regard all men alike is poor stuff for making a social order. *Nor are they easy traits.* It costs to be consistent. Finding ourselves bound in honor to personal sacrifice is not a pleas-

ant experience, but it gives no excuse for failing the group which has depended on us. The group is more than the self, and when it gains, the self asks no more. That is high doctrine, but the coming society will be built on it.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

For weal or for woe we are in social groups and we cannot get out of them. We leave one group only to go to another. It may be our duty to change or it may be our duty to abide where we are. But we are always abnormal and a bit absurd when we pretend to get along without a group. The writers of the psalms seem never to be out of sight of their relation to a social group. Some of their hardest experiences came from it. In the group were men who loved to do them mischief, selfish men, careless, indifferent to the things that meant most to themselves, and brighter in many cases than themselves. They actually did get on with their evil plans. One of the problems of the psalmists was to find and keep the right attitude toward the group and these men. They were not of the sort that could let purely personal feelings determine their attitude. As moral beings in a moral world they could not pretend that moral differences need not be considered. They knew they had to be considered in the long run and that God in the nature of things puts them first. *Loving bad men is entirely feasible and under the teaching of Christ we have learned it as a duty. But it does not blind honest men to the fact that badness is doomed and the social order that puts up with it is doomed also.*

Most of us would hardly dare to voice the attitude toward evil men that is expressed in some of the psalms, such as the 35th, 69th, 109th, and occasional verses in others, because it would involve personal antagonism in our own hearts. But we would be vastly stronger as members of our social group if we could be as deeply stirred over moral conditions as those psalms indicate. What we are afraid of is that we may be resenting mere personal differences between ourselves and other men who may be as good as we are, and whose evil we have no right to presume. If we could keep the moral issue clear, there are times when the psalms which we have just listed are as logical as the moral law. As Dr. Hitchcock said: "When a thoroughly bad man stands

revealed, only lightning is logical." These psalms are lightning, but most of us are safer with penny candles.

I

But it is not healthy-minded to think of the group as filled with evil. It is the only place where good has its chance. No man comes to his best self except in the social group. There are in the psalms plenty of instances of the solitary feeling, but it is always felt to be abnormal. The kind of character that grows in solitude or that demands persistent solitude for its exercise is not worth much in life. What God thinks of monasticism is shown by the abnormal men monastics turn out to be. They are "good," no doubt, but the men Christianity means to make must be good—for something. These men of the psalms count themselves part of their social group; they leave it with pain, they stand against it with regret, they stand for it with joy. In the broad sense, while no man is forced to the level of his group, yet we rise or fall together. We can be better or worse than the group to which we belong, but our betterness or our worseness will be sure to affect the level of the whole group in some degree. Even Jesus, who seemed miles above the moral level around him, set out from the very first to pull up toward his own level a small group of twelve, with others less formally included, and through them began immediately to affect the general level. No office man ever stood up decently and manfully for the thing that is right without changing the level of the office in some measure. No man ever went the pace of evil in a college, unresisted by the student forces, without lowering the general level. Conscious resistance can, of course, isolate one from the general movement for a time. Think out why it is that in times of religious revival some people seem all the more inclined to the wrong thing; can you understand that in your own life? On the other hand, how is it that when the moral level of a village is peculiarly low an occasional fine character appears and is steadily maintained? Is that generally the case, however? Does it not hold true that a college or a village rises or falls together?

It is this close interweaving of interests that *brings out the unselfish vein in us all.* We learn to pray God to visit us

with his salvation (106:1-5), not for our own sakes alone, but because we are eager to see the group share the blessing. We want it for ourselves, but as members of a group. Many a man has set himself to build up the character of the college of which he is part, not for his own sake, but because of other students who will be cheered by it. When a man from a small college won a graduate fellowship, he declared that he valued it less for his own sake than for the sake of the little college and the fellows who were there getting their education, and who would be reassured as to the value of the training they were getting. Many a man has been kept from courses of conduct because the traditions of his college are against them. He feels bound in the same bundle of life with the fellows who are gone. And every generation of students ought to give careful thought before they change college traditions, specially those that have entered into the fiber of the institution. Its play traditions may have little value; its trick traditions may have less; but its real educational traditions, of honesty and reliability, of squareness and steadiness, are among its assets of which no generation of students can deprive it without doing despite to the hard labor by which such traditions are always built up in the first place. They have come into the inheritance and they are not to trifle with it.

David Livingstone remembered his father's telling him as a lad that the Livingstone family had never been rich or famous, but it had always been honest; there had never been a liar in it, so far as the records were known. If any of the new generation became liars or dishonest they would be betraying the generations that had gone before them. So we become companions of those that fear God in all generations (119:63) and we learn the meaning of dwelling together with our fellows in unity (133) by which blessing flows down from the higher levels to the lower ones, as dew descends from higher Hermon to lower Zion in Palestine.

Being so fully part of the social group, *we keep our wide interest in men.* Mrs. Julia Ward Howe wanted Charles Sumner to see and know Edwin Booth. When she proposed a meeting, however, Sumner replied: "I don't know that I should care to meet him. I have outlived my interest in individuals." In her diary, Mrs. Howe adds, "Fortunately, God Almighty had not, by last accounts, got so far." Most

students of Sumner would feel that an enthusiasm for individuals would have helped his service of the whole, fine as that was. Here is the place to discuss in your own mind whether there is any way of balancing the social and individual interests so that each gets its share of attention. The social group is the bigger fact, but it is impossible without the individuals who make it up, and they would seem the fundamental fact. What is the truth and what is the error in saying that the state exists for citizens and not citizens for the state? Under what conditions should a fraternity exist for its members and when should its members think of themselves rather than in terms of the fraternity?

Sharing the common life of the social group, *we come to honest acknowledgment of the claims of its good and evil on us.* The reenforcing of good (22:22; 40:10) is as important as the opposing of evil. It gives the same chance for energy, and is all the more promising because it is always rewarded with a measure of success. Negative attitudes have always to be supplemented by positive ones to become effective. Men who know what we ought not to do are likely to be merely troublesome, until some man comes along who knows what ought to be done instead. The man whom we dread is the one who can pick flaws in plans, but has no constructive thing to propose. The best argument against a poor way of doing things is a better way of doing them. A bewildered Freshman returned from an hour with his tutor saying that he now knew so many things that he must not do during his first year that he would welcome at least one thing that he could do! Service of the social group demands more than the attitude of opposition to its evil.

But it does demand that attitude, for all that. The presence of a wrong or doubtful thing puts every man on his guard if he is really trying to help. It is not hypocritical, it is only sensible, to consider who are present before one speaks (39:1, 2). There are criticisms which it is wise to make in some hearings which would be most unwise in other hearings. Judgments on the Church mean one thing to church people and quite another thing to scoffing outsiders. You can see that in the use these people make of the attacks which evangelists make on the Church. Inside people accept them as challenges to cure the evils complained of, knowing that the evangelist himself still loves and honors

the Church or he would not stay in it. Outside people make it an added reason for disregarding or sneering at the Church. Apply the same thing to criticism of faculty actions or student votes; under what conditions are they wise, and when are they not so? Is it any use, in your own community, to try to stop criticism of official actions? Is the criticism generally healthy? So far as you take part in it yourself, can your purpose and method be wholly approved?

II

All the way through our relation to the social group is *the demand for the poised life.* The success of evil, the frequent difficulty of good, tend to unsettle us. The foundation under us seems insecure and our feet almost slip (73:2). We can even come to feel that we have been wasting our effort, making fools of ourselves for nothing (73:13). Over against this natural mood of depression was written much of Psalms 26, 37, 49, and 73. The resistance had been made, but what had come of it? *And there is no relief from the feeling of futility but the assurance that such effort does always pay, does always help, does always work toward victory.* That is because, as Carnegie Simpson says in "The Fact of Christ," "This is really not the world for worldliness." The universe is not ordered to give either advantage or permanence to wrong. That grew so clear to one of the men who had let himself be troubled about it that he says he was brutish and ignorant when he thought it (73:22).

A later writer (Nolan Rice Best in *The Continent,* June, 1916) says that the world is not "a success as an arena for sensuous enjoyment." "If in place of trying to get rich, to have fun or to be famous, one sets out to build up in himself a strong character, then the world helps him forward by every circumstance it surrounds him with. The only thing the world is perfectly fitted for is the development of moral character in men." The argument for that is good, but it required more insight and more patience than some of us have had. Only the persistent habit of taking high views and long views will give us that patience and insight. If we are determined not to take such views, we cannot keep our poise in the world as it is. Low views and short ones

give us warrant for thinking that moral qualities do not count and that the main thing is to "get there" by the shortest possible route. That is the first step toward joining in the very things which we once opposed; so we become merely reenforcing members of anything our social group may determine to do, rubber-stamping the orders of the group. Nothing else seems worth while; but as a matter of fact, doing that sort of thing is less worth while still.

And the worst part of that is that it kills in us the spirit of fight. Professor James used to argue for a moral equivalent of war, and the phrase has struck a good chord in many writings since. Several such substitutes have been suggested, but none is more feasible than the larger conflicts that are on in the whole social order of today. *And as we have come to feel that the man who hides or skulks in the day of battle is only second in shame to the man who deserts to the enemy and fights against his brothers, so we are coming to feel that the man who stands by when the great issues are being joined in life, on college campus or in community, taking no part, is only a shade meaner than the man who goes over to the other side and adds the weight of his life and influence to the burden that must be moved before the wrongs can be righted.* One of the sharpest condemnations in the psalms is the one that charges an enemy with seeing a thief and consenting with him (50:18). The priest and the Levite in Jesus' Samaritan story did nothing bad, except that doing nothing was itself bad.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Consider the value of George Borrow's expression: "Fear God and take your own part." How does it fit into the thought of our necessary membership in a social group?

Is war a constructive element in the social order? What moral value has it to justify Professor James' expression?

CHAPTER V

Self Against the Social Group

DAILY READINGS

Fifth Week, First Day

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers:
But his delight is in the law of Jehovah;
And on his law doth he meditate day and night.
And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
The wicked are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the wicked shall perish.

—Psalm 1.

Here is a man set over against a group. The group is always put in the plural; one man of a certain type is on the other side. The attitude which he takes is worded here negatively: "Walketh *not,* standeth *not,* sitteth *not.*" Of course it is also positive, for every man in his social relations has to walk and stand and sit somewhere. Refusing to be in one relation involves choosing to be in another relation. Ordinarily our social group helps us. Everybody can be better for being in college or in a society or in a church, if he is brave enough to hold himself up against some influences. He must not commit himself to sneezing because the group takes snuff. He must live in the social group, opposing the walk, the way, the seat of certain people in it. Which

people they are will determine the kind of man he is. That cannot be maintained on a purely negative basis. "You cannot drive out bad air with a club"; only the inflow of good air gets rid of it. In Jesus' story the evil spirit came back again to the house and finding it empty possessed it again (Luke 11:24-26). *Our only safeguard against lower attractions is in finding higher pleasures. We keep out bad thoughts by meditations that are good.* The psalm says that the man who does so is blessed, happy. It works out so in the long run; the process may have in it other elements, but strong men are not asking to be happy on the spur of the moment.

Fifth Week, Second Day

The largest danger of a bad social group is not that it may do some external damage to a man, but that it may absorb one into itself, making him like itself, dyeing him with its own colors. It is becoming like the men whom one now disapproves on high moral grounds that constitutes the tragedy of many lives. Being lied about is no great matter; being made a liar is the serious thing. Lies are like measles—they do no special damage unless they strike in. Booker Washington used often to say that holding another man in the gutter is always harder on the upper than on the under man. You have to be there yourself in order to hold him there. He is there against his will, and may not be hurt by it; you are there by your own will and cannot escape being injured. Who recovers sooner from a fraudulent victory, the winner or the loser? The loser can come to laugh over it; the winner knows himself a fraud whenever he thinks of it. It is becoming like the wrong group that is to be dreaded.

Unto thee, O Jehovah, will I call:
My rock, be not thou deaf unto me;
Lest, if thou be silent unto me,
I become like them that go down into the pit.
Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee,
When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.
Draw me not away with the wicked,
And with the workers of iniquity;
That speak peace with their neighbors,
But mischief is in their hearts.

—Psalm 28:1-3.

Notice that in this passage the pull of wrong influences in the social group is compared to a tide, an undertow, that tugs at one and makes him feel the need of a rock on which he can stand. *Do not most of us lose our balance gradually, subtly undermined, even though we fall with a crash at the last?*

Fifth Week, Third Day

Jehovah, I have called upon thee; make haste unto me:
Give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth;
Keep the door of my lips.
Incline not my heart to any evil thing,
To practice deeds of wickedness
With men that work iniquity:
And let me not eat of their dainties.
Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness;
And let him reprove me, it shall be as oil upon the head;
Let not my head refuse it:
For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.
—Psalm 141: 1-5.

This little section of a psalm suggests one of the largest difficulties any of us can feel in taking an attitude against the social group of which we may be part. It is the loss of the advantages that lie with the group. Fellowship means so much to many of us that breaking it, even if we feel it is wrong, hurts us almost too much to be endured. We tend to herd, and no deed of wickedness looks quite so bad when we are with other people. We would not do the wrong thing by ourselves, but with others it is easier. Even wolves hunt in packs and are likely to be cowards alone. If cheating is fairly common in school, it is easier to cheat. Refusing the accustomed ways seems like breaking the fellowship of the group, setting one's self up as better than the others, and that often sends one to Coventry. There is no particular drawing to vandalism or hazing, all by one's self; it is the crowd that makes it attractive and we all like our crowd. Then, there are other advantages of the group, called here their "dainties." Can we forego these obvious advantages for the sake of being right? Certainly not unless there is

a good deal of very good fiber in our makeup or unless we want that fiber enough to pay the price for it.

Fifth Week, Fourth Day

There is about as much cowardice in this matter of adverse attitude toward one's social group as anywhere else in life. Some of us are cowardly in our refusal to face the adverse facts. We pretend that the difficulties are negligible, or that the evils themselves can be disregarded. One modern school of religious thinking has declared it our duty to negate all such things. Aside from the dishonesty that so easily develops from that, we must keep it clear that there is no real courage about it. Most officers executed in the war are allowed to have their eyes unbound when they face the firing squad and the bravest ones claim the privilege. Bravery wants to look the facts in the face, scorns to find a cheap relief by pretenses about them. This is the way one man faced his difficulties:

Jehovah, how are mine adversaries increased!
Many are they that rise up against me.
Many there are that say of my soul,
There is no help for him in God.
But thou, O Jehovah, art a shield about me;
My glory, and the lifter up of my head.
I cry unto Jehovah with my voice,
And he answereth me out of his holy hill.
I laid me down and slept;
I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me.
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people
That have set themselves against me round about.
—Psalm 3: 1-6.

Looking at the facts does not mean fretting or worrying about difficulties and evils. Instead, it prepares us for the steadiness of life that makes us equal to the fight against them. *When we learn to hold such things out in the light before God, with no pretenses, we can be quiet about them.* This writer, knowing all this about his many adversaries who were challenging his place in the social order, could yet lie down in peace and sleep, knowing that the whole enterprise was in higher hands than his own. That was God's prescription for one of the bravest men of whom we have any

record. Read I Kings 19 and see how Elijah, depressed and worn nervously, was first allowed to sleep and eat, getting his nerve back, and then was allowed to face the facts again. The overwrought, nervous state is not the one in which we get our fairest views of life.

Fifth Week, Fifth Day

Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers?
Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
Unless Jehovah had been my help,
My soul had soon dwelt in silence.
When I said, My foot slippeth;
Thy lovingkindness, O Jehovah, held me up.
In the multitude of my thoughts within me
Thy comforts delight my soul. . . .
But Jehovah hath been my high tower,
And my God the rock of my refuge.

—Psalm 94: 16-19, 22.

Here is a case of the help which history brought to a man making his stand against his social group. He was facing a new condition, with new complications. There came to him a moment of wonder whether he could do it. He knew as we all have known under similar conditions, that he could not do it alone. Somehow others must get involved in it before it could be anything else than a mere self-assertion. We have not made many fights against wrong if we do not know what that means. One feels small and inadequate or else impertinent and officious. What right has one man to set himself up against his group? Only a few people are jaunty all the way through a real effort to resist wrong. Others wear a jaunty exterior, but down in their hearts they often wonder whether it is worth while and how it will come out.

Then comes history to the rescue. There are bad chapters there, but the long-running fact is that the forces of good keep winning victories. *Evil has plenty of precedents but not much encouragement from history. Good may have fewer precedents but it has more encouragement.* One has to forget or be ignorant of a great deal of history in order to be fearful of the outcome of a fight for right. And as personal experience extends, one recalls more and more

times when his foot held because a power not himself was making for righteousness through him. The finest chapters of general and personal history answer the question whether standing against the group for the right is worth while.

Fifth Week, Sixth Day

In Jehovah do I take refuge:
How say ye to my soul,
Flee as a bird to your mountain;
For, lo, the wicked bend the bow,
They make ready their arrow upon the string,
That they may shoot in darkness at the upright in heart;
If the foundations be destroyed,
What can the righteous do?
Jehovah is in his holy temple;
Jehovah, his throne is in heaven;
His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.
Jehovah trieth the righteous;
But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.
Upon the wicked he will rain snares;
Fire and brimstone and burning wind shall be the portion of their cup.
For Jehovah is righteous; he loveth righteousness:
The upright shall behold his face. —Psalm 11.

The earlier half of this passage, closing with the question, presents one of the problems of the attitude of opposition to wrong in the social group. The attitude seems futile. Bad men are simply stronger than good men; they are shrewder; they "get there," while good men are so often ineffective. The very foundations are destroyed and "what have the righteous accomplished?"—so the margin reads. It is the way of the fall of many a good man in public life, of many a clean lad in college. He stands out finely for the best things and then there comes to him the feeling of the utter futility of it all. Sometimes early, sometimes later in college, that comes over a student. He is missing the good times in the interest of a principle and neither he nor the principle is really getting anywhere. He has stood out, but the evil has gone on just the same. He has become unpopular and foolish in the minds of other people, and things are unchanged. What is the use?

The latter part of the passage, after the question, answers that God is the use. *If this is really a universe at all, if anyone is on a moral basis here, then the dishonest thing, the unfair thing, the cheap thing, is simple folly.* God is there "within the shadow keeping watch above His own," and all these bits of courage count in the long battle.

Fifth Week, Seventh Day

Cynicism is a besetting sin of the mood which we are now discussing. One easily becomes a mere croaker, refusing the evil of the group out of contempt for it. That is unhealthy and may be just morbid. Read over again the seven resolutions of this little passage and see how sane they are.

I will sing of lovingkindness and justice:
Unto thee, O Jehovah, will I sing praises.
I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way:
Oh when wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
I will set no base thing before mine eyes:
I hate the work of them that turn aside;
It shall not cleave unto me.
A perverse heart shall depart from me:
I will know no evil thing.

—Psalm 101: 1-4.

Here is no doubt of the presence and power in the world of lovingkindness and justice. Evil has not right of way in the world and is not the law of life, even if there is a vast deal of it. Men can be wise and can walk in a perfect way—at least they can resolve to do it, and that is our part. We cannot destroy all the base things, but we can keep from gazing at them when they are none of our business. Dirty deeds are done, but they need not cleave to us. Perverse hearts are plenty, but they need not be our boon companions. Evil things are here, but they need not make up our stock of knowledge. When a man can say, "I will," six times in so few lines and let two of them involve a resolution to sing, he is not much of a cynic, but he is likely to be a vigorous outstanding fighter on the right side. We need no more croaking reformers. We want joyous ones, who are sure enough that righteousness has conquering power from God to

sing about it. Such men cannot be triflers, compromising with evil conditions. Nothing but the best is good enough for the social group which involves lovingkindness and justice, but nothing is to be despaired of in behalf of such a group.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

We are not in our social group for what it can do for us, but quite as much for what we can do for it. Of course it serves our lives; we could not live without it. But it is much too one-sided if we do not think of our lives in terms of the need of our group. And that is sure to demand, soon or late, that we take our stand against the group at some point. It is easy to accept bad conditions blandly, quietly evading all personal responsibility. A strong current of popular opinion runs that way. Taking other people and their needs seriously is not quite the thing, or was not until the new social sense was aroused. Hegel carries this idea of social ethics so far as to think that the individual ought never to set himself against the main line of opinion around him. "The wisest men of antiquity," he says, "have given judgment that wisdom and virtue consist in living agreeably to the ethos of one's people." Mr. Bradley is so sure of this that he says that for a man "to wish to be better than the world is to be already on the threshold of immorality." But whatever the argument for such ideas, the reigning judgment of the past and of the present is against it. Dr. Rashdall has plenty of evidence for his saying that "moral progress has, in point of fact, only been brought about by the acts of individual men and women who have had the courage to condemn, to go beyond, and to defy the existing code of public opinion at a given time and place."

I

We are all in danger of soft acquiescence in conditions which we find when we arrive. But we lose much when we lose our power of moral indignation. When evils do not hurt us enough to stir us, it does not show that they are not evil; it shows that we are dull. If the exploitation of the poor for profit, of unfortunate women for pleasure, of little children as toilers, does not matter to us, we are

cheapened ourselves. The poor in London were just as needy when the committee called on Mr. Scrooge in his counting house on Christmas eve as they were the next day when Scrooge met the chairman of the committee on the street, but Scrooge had a hard heart at the first meeting and the need could not get to him; his heart had grown tender by the second time, and he could feel what the need was. When we keep wholly calm about wrong in our social group, we do not reveal anything about the moral quality of the things that are wrong, but we reveal something about ourselves.

After all is said about the gentleness and tenderness of Jesus, it remains true that you could not be comfortable with him unless you were willing to accept strong treatment of hypocrites and exploiters. He was tender, but not soft; he was gentle, but not weak. Sometimes we say lightly about a wrong thing that it never touched us. The real question is whether we hit it as it came near. As Dr. Babcock said years ago, "We are not here to play," to have a smooth time, to drift along with the current. There is fighting to be done, there are loads to lift, there are oppositions to be accomplished. *Can a man live an acquiescent life and not miss his best chances to help?*

The hardest place to meet wrong and oppose it is in the nearer circle, which we are here calling the social group. Jesus warned us that under his plan for social regeneration "a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew 10:36). Not merely that they will sometimes oppose the best in him, but that he will sometimes need to oppose things dear to them, and so run athwart their practices. In the 106th psalm (vs. 30, 31) a gruesome story of early Hebrew history is reviewed from this point of view. The story itself is told in the Numbers. It is of Phinehas, who saw a foul wrong that was hurting the whole nation, occurring within the group of which he was part. He dealt with it violently and there will always be nice people who will be so concerned with his violence that they forget what he was trying to get done. Healthy-minded people must remember that the wrong he was attacking provoked wide imitation, and was one of the subtle evils that draw many men in their train, while his sharp way of handling it is not in danger of imitation. This is no time to defend Phinehas, nor any of the group of men who stood at crises and roughly, even wrongly, opposed evil.

Certainly, until we are willing in safer and yet equally strong ways to oppose evil, we may not be too sharp against them without exposing our own indifference toward the evils which they hated. It is, on the whole, better to do a piece of needed work in a way less than the best than to leave it undone in the most correct fashion.

II

The attitude of opposition may be both negative and positive. The best opposition is a life kept free but not isolated. We do not stop evils in the game by going off the field. That has its value, of course, but it makes us outsiders, easy to accuse of lack of understanding. There may be times when that is all we can do. It is sure that we do not strengthen our hands for opposition by joining for a time in the wrong thing. Repentance after the deed is better than none at all, but it lays one liable to the charge of fickleness. When Paul gives his list (I Cor. 9:19-22) of the "all things" which he was willing to become that he might save men, he does not put wrong things in the list. He was not willing to be a liar that he might save liars; he was not willing to cheat that he might oppose the whole matter of cheating; he was not willing to tell a foul story that he might later stop the telling of foul stories in his group. He was not willing to do these things or their like, because they do not help in opposing the wrong; they hinder. The writer of the 26th psalm rests part of his argument on the fact that he has not "sat with men of falsehood." He hates "the assembly of evil doers." The 17th psalm follows the same general line. These men have kept their lives free.

But their lives have not been isolated. They have not let the matter become personal. In so far as the sharpest psalms represent a mood of moral indignation, they might well enter our blood again at this time. Their writers are generally conscious of nothing but a genuine desire to help and be friendly. Their memories are of good fellowship in the past which they did not break (41:9, 55:12). In the midst of their opposition, they claim the spirit of love (109:4, 5). There come times when we feel that the moral universe is involved in a situation, when moral issues become clear and we are no longer personally worth considering. The only

thing for us to guard at such times is our own spirits; if they are right, moral indignation will never hurt us.

There have been two men, both now dead, who did the same kind of work in different sections of America, opposing the same evil and producing the same results. Both of them hated the evil with a consuming hatred and each fought it by all means in his power. One of them bore many scars of his battle on his body; he had been attacked and beaten over and over; he had been nearly murdered time and again; in prisons and places of iniquity were his deadly enemies, who hated him with a perfect hatred. The other was never seriously attacked, bore no scars, was often sought out by men whom he had imprisoned for their crime with full assurance that he would help them, was never approached with any suggestion of compromise, was never personally hated and yet was feared in his territory even more than the first in his, as an utterly relentless pursuer of the crimes to whose destruction he was devoting his life. One of them could not keep the personal element out of his fight; the other could. One made individuals feel that he hated them for their devilish business; the other made them feel that he hated their devilish business so that it hurt him to have anybody connected with it. Partly that is a matter of personal temperament, but which would you choose for yourself as a fighting disposition?

You can see the same thing on a smaller scale in your own community. One man fights a wrong so that he becomes personally unpopular and out of favor; another is quite as well known as opposed to it, but holds the esteem of the group in the meanwhile. In your own observation, which was the more influential in the ending of the wrong? Which influenced you more yourself? Did you feel that the second sacrificed something for popularity? Did you feel that the former was braver?

III

The only salvation for most of us from being parties to the wrong we ought to oppose is active opposition to it. If we live as near to other people as we ought to do, we cannot help feeling the tug of the things that they do. The mood that would have the wings of the dove and fly far away to be at rest, finding in the wilderness a home (55:6, 7) is real

enough at certain stages in life, but it is not normal and certainly it does not appeal to the finest things in us. Getting away from trouble is not specially fine. Jesus did not pray that his disciples might be taken out of the world, but that they might stay in it and yet be kept from the evil (John 17:15). We must keep close to the conditions that need help; we need the conditions ourselves as truly as they need us.

But if we do stay there, we shall find an undertow pulling us off of our footing and out of our depth, against which we have to stand with more than negative aggression. The influences that break down our finest resolutions are subtle ones, seldom overt. A man entered one of our large American universities a loyal Christian and left it almost as decided against the Christian faith. Later he came back to his faith and was led to think back over the conditions that had unsettled him in his university. He could not name any professor who had said a plain, straightout word against the student's faith, but could think of several whose classrooms had the atmosphere of contempt for it, where innuendoes and slighting references were made to unstated positions which he recognized as those he had held. The fraternity and campus arguments had not been serious enough to unsettle him, for he knew the answer to most of them perfectly, but the general tone of the place, the unspoken amusement at religious professions, the disregard of religious demands, gradually cast a spell over him. No one tried to undo him, but presently he found himself undone. During his course he fell into certain wrong ways of living, ways that he recognized perfectly as wrong, but wrong only by the standards of living which he brought to the university with him; he wanted to follow those ways and so, for the sake of inner peace, he modified his standards to include the lower things.

He knew better, of course; everybody does. And if he had faced it squarely and tried to accept the lowered standard all at once, he could not have done it, but the undertow got him and he was off his moral foundations. Telling of it afterward, he spoke of another man in the university at the same time, who entered the legitimate life of the institution as much as he did and even more, and who came out of his course aggressively Christian. He could not see how it was accomplished except by the definite stand this

man had taken from the first against the lowering things of the life around him. He had not evaded the life; he had lived it, but always on the side of the things that were best.

There is no danger in being where things are wrong except the tendency of badness to rub off. There is a kind of wet paint about evil; it requires preternatural care to keep from touching it so that it leaves a stain. Labelling it only adds to the danger. How often have you gone up to a sign of wet paint and touched the surface to see if it was really still wet? And that is what men do about evil; they try it to see if it is what other men pretend it is. On the other hand, the consciousness of the presence of wrong conditions stirs the blood, may even stir the ire of inherently active men. The 101st psalm, the 73rd, the 141st, all have this spirit of keeping one's self free, even while one is in the midst of the evil conditions.

Henry Boynton Smith, Bowdoin '34, who later became a great American religious leader, went as a young man to a foreign country to study. His friends grew anxious about him, but he reassured them by saying that he knew his danger and was watching himself. "Be sure," he wrote, "that if I find my faith undermined, I will come home." There are men who would count that cowardice; they say if their faith can be shaken, they want it shaken. That is mere bravado—as though a physician, in a plague section, should be counted a coward if he refused to watch against the first symptoms of the disease he is fighting. He cannot know too much about it, for the sake of others, but if he let it seize himself, he is out of commission. That has happened with scores of college men. They have been ready to accept any kind of risk, supposably to grow stronger for life, only to be put out of commission for life. What they needed was courage enough to stand against the social group for the group's sake as well as their own. The man who is willing to take all his group is able to give him, but is not willing to give his group all he is able to give it, is not playing fair.

IV

It is not mere fear of popular disapproval that holds many of us back from the courageous opposition to wrong. It is

dread lest we may deserve that disapproval. Becoming a croaker and faultfinder is painfully easy and painfully common, too. Once in a while appears a Dante who can take a brave stand against Florence, or a Savonarola who can criticize the Medici, or a Tennyson who can hold up his land to severe judgment in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," and yet be really loving and loyal. So occasionally a lad can stand against a college tradition and keep fine and strong and not become a mere pedant and stickler for his own ideas. But generally it is not so, and we have to admit it. It is hard to take a decided stand against something in the group and yet be honestly for the group. Always one must pass through a period of seeming to be a mere faultfinder, overproud of one's own opinion, setting up one's own standard against everybody else's standards, taking a holier-than-thou position, which every normal person hates. The problem is to keep from being that kind of critic down in one's heart and also to be brave enough to stand the pressure of common opinion that one is that kind until the opposite fact can be proved by time.

All of us hate being called Jeremiahs. But do we know the real story of Jeremiah? The fact is that he was right in his contention, as his history showed. And the further fact is that he was right in his spirit all the way through. He was always ready for any scheme which was not palpably foolish that would help the situation. He was not willing to do just anything that any fool proposed, but he was eager to save the situation as long as there was the slightest hope of doing it. He was no croaker. He differed from other people only in the fact that his eyes were open and theirs were not. The 31st psalm is often ascribed to him as a man whose experiences would just fit such a song of disappointment and query. John Henry Newman said that "Jeremiah's ministry may be summed up in three words, Good hope, labor, disappointment." In that psalm appears the feeling of one who sometimes has to come out frankly against his social group and even the whole social order of which he is part. Always there is the danger of seeming merely stubborn (v. 18), and indeed of actually being so, a danger that makes so many men cowards on moral questions. Always there is the pain of estranging those whom one needs for comfort and cheer (vs. 11, 12). Always there

is the feeling that in near circles one is being discussed and condemned so that talk changes when one comes along (vs. 11, 13, 20). It is all very natural.

But, meanwhile, no matter what the danger or the cost, here is our social group and the only hope for it is that it be saved to its higher ideals, and that men like ourselves who love it shall not desert it, but do our honest part in its behalf.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Read Browning's "Ivan Ivanovitch" and consider sharply its social problem—the right of an individual in a social group to take the correction of an evil into his own hands. Consider carefully the argument of the priest. Tennyson's "Maud" presents a phase of the same problem.

Try to think out the principal traits which a man ought to show if he is to set himself worthily against any particular wrong on a college campus, in a society, or in a community. Concrete cases are better than speculation.

CHAPTER VI

Self for the Social Group

DAILY READINGS

Sixth Week, First Day

Blessed is he that considereth the poor:
Jehovah will deliver him in the day of evil.
Jehovah will preserve him, and keep him alive,
And he shall be blessed upon the earth;
And deliver not thou him unto the will of his enemies.
Jehovah will support him upon the couch of languishing:
Thou makest all his bed in his sickness.

—Psalm 41: 1-3.

Here the self is taking account of the group and the neediest portion of it. The margin of our Bibles substitutes "weak" for "poor," in the first line. It is not money poverty that is of largest concern. That hurts a great many and men who love the group must watch with interest any movement that promises to relieve distress by a more equitable distribution of wealth. Is not that a surface matter? The man spoken of here takes account of the fact that other people are weaker than he is and governs himself accordingly. The weakest men in college are not generally the men with least money, often they are the ones with most money. In the average community there is often more manhood among young fellows who are working their way along than among those who have all the things they want. Men are needed who will set their strength over against other people's weakness, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the weaker people. Even kings get their honor from doing that (72: 12). Whoever does it has the forces of the universe with him in his effort. The law of sacrifice and service is universal, one of the habits of God himself. He takes note of the man who

takes note of weakness. And he sees to it that no genuinely unselfish act is regretted; he makes its doer "blessed," happy. When we talk about the ingratitude of others toward ourselves we reveal that we were expecting something for our supposedly unselfish actions! The man who considers the weak may have a couch of languishing or a sick bed, and this does not say he may not, but he will be sustained on it, and that is better.

Sixth Week, Second Day

The Bible is not much concerned about the divine right of kings, but it is very clear about the divine duty of kings. The divine right belongs to the subjects; they have the right to the right kind of kings. This 72nd psalm expresses the ideal for any man who knows himself superior to others at any point.

Give the king thy judgments, O God,
And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
He will judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with justice.
The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
And the hills, in righteousness.
He will judge the poor of the people,
He will save the children of the needy,
And will break in pieces the oppressor.

—Psalm 72:1-4.

We have left governmental kings behind, partly because they persisted in thinking of their superiority in terms of somebody else's service instead of their own. If they had counted themselves chiefly burdenbearers for their subjects, we might not have grown so restive under the system of which they are part. And we have not left behind the many other types of kingship, which involve superiority in mind, in leadership, in ability. President Buckham of Vermont Unversity called college students "the very elect" because they were the most severely selected group in the country, each one being the survivor of so large a number that started with him. On that account he declared their responsibility is greatest. Whoever knows himself at any point superior to any other man is the theme of this psalm

and ought to think not of his divine rights but of his divine duties. The king lives for the nation, not for himself, and the nation does not live for him. In the Christian scheme men who want to be great must earn the place by being servants of all (Mark 10: 43). In any social group some men are sure to be broken in pieces; here it is the oppressors. There is a grim justice in that. They have used their superiority for their own profit; a moral universe cannot approve them.

Sixth Week, Third Day

He sent a man before them;
Joseph was sold for a servant:
His feet they hurt with fetters:
He was laid in chains of iron,
Until the time that his word came to pass,
The word of Jehovah tried him.
The king sent and loosed him;
Even the ruler of peoples, and let him go free.
He made him lord of his house,
And ruler of all his substance;
To bind his princes at his pleasure,
And teach his elders wisdom.

—Psalm 105: 17-22.

"He sent a man before them"—could it be more finely said? A man is always being sent before the rank and file. He suffers and they profit by it. He gains his power at heavy cost and they reap the advantage. There is a joy in leadership, of course. There is inspiration in being the path-breaker. But the pioneers are easier to read about and to glorify than to imitate. The third generation after them usually boasts of them by word of mouth and shames them by weakness of character and life. What we think of our ancestors is not half so important as what they would think of us. In one of our western cities, one of the greatest orgies of a recent season, with lavish and boastful outlay and immoral exhibition, was to honor the memory of men who toiled through hardship and pain to open the country and get its life started. *The only real way to honor a pioneer ancestry is to be to our own generation what it was to its generation.* Think over the names of men sent before their

fellows and see what traits are needed now and what ones you could offer the world: men like Moses, David, John the Baptist, Paul, Luther, Knox, Washington, Lincoln, men whom we make heroes, but who knew the storm and stress of life while they lived it. Building monuments to them is cheap approval unless the monuments are built by men like them.

Sixth Week, Fourth Day

Biographies never take up a man at the beginning of his larger career, as though that could be cut off from the earlier days before there was any career in sight. Presidents of countries are always something else first, and you cannot understand the presidential career without some knowledge of the life that had in it no such career. No one can read the story of David without seeing the influence of his early work as a shepherd. He blends in his public dealing the tenderness and the firmness of that calling. A shepherd remembers that sheep are foolish, living for the moment and its pleasure, without long vision or power of self-protection. He cannot, on that account, be harsh with them, but on the same account he cannot let them have their own way without control.

He chose David also his servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds:
From following the ewes that have their young he brought him,
To be the shepherd of Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.
So he was their shepherd according to the integrity of his heart,
And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.
—Psalm 78: 70-72.

That is the key to most of David's rule. Browning makes a good deal of those early days and their lessons in his "Saul." When Jesus called Peter the fisherman to be his disciple, he promised to gather up the earlier life into this new service and make him a fisher of men (Matt. 4: 19). Peter's life could be written from that point of view and could hardly be understood without it. And all that puts a

new premium on the earlier tasks of life. Being a good college leader or a good gang leader has its bearing on what comes after. *The big group which one must serve after a while is essentially like the little group of which one is a member at the beginning of life.* Learning to live for the smaller group carries with it the secret of living for the larger group. Peter was not a fisherman for fun, but for the purposes of life, and as those purposes enlarged they used all the deposits of the earlier days. Are you making the most of your present opportunities to live for your group?

Sixth Week, Fifth Day

Jehovah, remember for David
All his affliction;
How he sware unto Jehovah,
And vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:
Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,
Nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
Or slumber to mine eyelids;
Until I find out a place for Jehovah,
A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.
—Psalm 132: 1-5.

Here is David thinking of the larger interest of his people. Their food, their wealth, their outward prosperity had concerned him. He had carried on his heart these surface needs of his social group for which he was responsible. But all the while he was keeping in mind the deeper needs. Israel's history was bound up with its religion. Its greatest need was to keep the religious elements in its life vigorous. Not merely for Jehovah's sake, but for Israel's sake also, David vowed to provide a center for worship. There is always danger of being so occupied with obvious needs that the deeper needs slip out of our concern. *What is the deepest need of the social group that means most to you, and how far are you really concerned with its supply?* Was the old alumnus right when he wrote the president of his college that he trembled for it as it received a large gift for buildings and endowment? What could safeguard it?

Recall the story of David's disappointment over carrying out his plan in full. He had to pass it on unfinished, but

largely advanced by his work (I Chron. 22:14-16). That is so of many fine projects for good that we attempt; we cannot finish them, but we can advance them. Life is measured, not by what we get done, but by the size of the projects to which we give ourselves. Simon Bolivar, the South American patriot, said: "We shall not see, nor the generation following us, the triumph of the America we are now founding." Is not that the very spirit of patriotism? The best things we help with are not likely to be finished until long after we are gone.

Sixth Week, Sixth Day

Come, and hear, all ye that fear God,
And I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
I cried unto him with my mouth,
And he was extolled with my tongue.
If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear:
But verily God hath heard;
He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
Blessed be God,
Who hath not turned away my prayer,
Nor his lovingkindness from me.

—Psalm 66: 16-20.

It is often true that the best service a life can render to its social group is in the testimony it can bear to the better things. The testimony is partly by word and partly just by exhibition of itself. Sometimes we say that a good life needs no tongue, but that is too wide a statement. A good life has a tongue in itself and there are times when verbal testimony is as valuable as any other kind. Jesus had the happy faculty of making friends with all sorts of people, not forever correcting or reproving them, though he could not have approved all he saw in them, but letting his life bear testimony. Yet he could speak also when the need arose. When he was leaving the earthly group, he told them that they were to be his exhibits (Acts 1:8), for that is the meaning of the word witnesses. He was to display them as arguments in the case before the world. That is what he could do with men, he would say. Mr. Moody said he resolved to give the grace of God a chance to show what could be done

with a life wholly given over to it. The resolution was a daring one, too much for most of us, but challenging every one of us. It calls for a right life, which does not regard iniquity in the heart so that it can be blessed before men, and also for words of testimony in their time and place. A ruined man told a pastor that he wished he could set up his life as a red flag at certain danger-points for young people. Why not set up our lives as white flags of encouragement at difficult points of life for our group?

Sixth Week, Seventh Day

I will come with the mighty acts of the Lord Jehovah:
I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.
O God, thou hast taught me from my youth;
And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.
Yea, even when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not,
Until I have declared thy strength unto the next generation,
Thy might to every one that is to come.
Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high;
Thou who hast done great things,
O God, who is like unto thee?

—Psalm 71: 16-19.

This is the way it looks from the farther end of life. Youth is past, but its memories remain. Some of them are dim; others are still clear-cut. Most college men are surprised as the years go on to see what a readjustment occurs in memories. At reunions they talk of the more trifling things; down in their hearts they treasure the things that counted, if there were any such things. It is those things that get to the center of thought when they speak seriously of the meaning of college life. Students hearing them sometimes sneer at their pretense of making the really great things so important; they say that they do not believe they thought so at the time, and they are perfectly right. But that is what time does; it shows what lasts in life and what does not. *On the whole, who would be the better judge of the lasting things, the man who has lived his life or the man who is beginning it?* This man takes farther views and wants

his life to count with the next generation. There is a mood of age which young people sometimes note with disapproval, which suggests that the passing generation carries away with it the main body of wisdom. Job scoffed at his friends by saying that doubtless they were the people and wisdom would die with them (Job 12:2), but the sneer runs deeper than we readily think. If wisdom does die with any generation, so much the more shame to that generation. All that we have that is best ought to be passed on to the next generation in life, college or community.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

The psalms reveal throughout a strong sense of the obligation of a man to take his place in his social group and lose himself in it, a kind of forerunner of Jesus' word that a man must lose his life to save it. In telling the story of Moses (106:32) it is said that he suffered not so much because of his own misdeed as because of the provocation which came to him from his social group. It went ill with him for their sakes. It is only in theory that a hard and fast individualism is possible. In experience men are always living and suffering for and because of the social group. We are socially built, and we never come to ourselves except in social service. What the group does for the individual does not now concern us; we are to think in this study of what the individual must be and do for the group.

I

At the beginning, the attitude of these songs toward the commonplace duty as over against the exceptional one is apparent. It appears in their frequent reference to the blessing of kindness to the poor and needy (41:1; 112:5), and also in the complaint of unkindness which is so often made, with the assertion that this ensures the attention of God and the penalty of his wrath on the unkind (109:4, 5; 35:14, 15). One verse is specially suggestive: "They also that render evil for good are adversaries unto me, because I follow the thing that is good" (38:20). The pressure of this steady demand for fellowship with need is likely to become so familiar that we lose all sense of it. The emergent needs overshadow it.

Most of the city charitable organizations in America announced shortly after the European war began that their funds for current work had been greatly reduced by the special relief funds that had been raised for European peoples. That was entirely natural; what is your estimate of the equity or wisdom of it?

An interesting instance of the contact of the commonplace and the emergent needs occurs in Mark 14:3-9, in the incident of the alabaster cruse of ointment, about which the disciples complained because it seemed a waste to use it so and not distribute its proceeds to the poor. Jesus said, "For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good; but me ye have not always." Here were the abiding opportunities which seem never fully met, alongside an opportunity which must be taken now or never. Whether the word of Deuteronomy (15:11), "the poor will never cease out of the land," is to be taken as final in the social order or not, it has certainly been proved true up to this time in any order we have been able to develop, and the remainder of the verse has been pressed upon kindly men ever since: "Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land."

Some of the finest lives in our modern history have been given to just this commonplace need, always here, never showy, never seeming to abate. Arnold Toynbee felt the pull of impoverished London. So did Charles Booth. Jacob Riis bore the Five Points in New York as long as he could, but paid high tribute to men and women not so forceful as he who had for years been sharing the suffering of the people before he came more correctively into the scene. Today as never before these everyday, commonplace problems which involve the unhappiness of so many people are commanding the service, the life, even the death, of large numbers of devoted human lovers. This is not the custom of all men. In a brief sketch of Professor Sumner of Yale ("The Challenge of Facts") his father is described as a "simple man with sturdy common sense, who had never been trained to entertain any kind of philosophical abstractions. His plan was, if things did not go to suit him, to examine the situation, see what could be done, take a new start, and try again. For instance, inasmuch as the custom in New Jersey was

store pay and he did not like store pay, he moved to New England where he found he could get cash." Doubtless this policy is sometimes necessary, and it may have been wisest for Thomas Sumner, but is there not something finer in staying where the wrong conditions are and dealing with them, for the sake of the many who cannot leave them and go somewhere else? At any rate, hundreds of people are deliberately going into the trying parts of cities to share the needs and help to correct them.

We are discovering that it is of the very essence of the Christian faith to cure the causes of these evils, so far as we may be able. There is not much that is dramatic about it, for that matter there is not much that is dramatic about any permanent work. We say sometimes that going out to mission fields is romantic, striking service, but the larger service of missionary life is not dramatic but just plain, matter-of-course living amid trying conditions and humdrum duties. A few things will do to tell; most things are not striking enough to be written down. Jesus said that this incident which the disciples thought so unusual would be told around the world, as it has been, but its largest effect has been to start people, not to dramatic things, but to the every-day sacrificial life which is the beauty of Christian history.

II

This social opportunity *determines a man's estimate of himself and his experiences.* Several times the psalmists ask for blessings on themselves for the sake of other people. One feels that if he could have restored to him the joy of salvation which he had lost through some personal sin, and could be upheld with a willing spirit, he could then teach transgressors God's ways and help sinners to turn to God (51:13). Even forgiveness can be turned into a challenge to service, and anyone who ever tried to help other people when his own conscience was troubling him knows how difficult it is. The many references to Abraham take us back to the familiar promise covering his life which makes him a blessing to many others in being blessed himself (Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:18). God's best blessings are always given to us as trustees for investment in other lives. Many a man has felt more free to ask blessings on his work when he could

honestly include other people in his results than if he were acting for himself. In May, 1916, the President of the United States said to the National Press Club: "I tell you this, gentlemen, the only thing that saves the world is the little handful of disinterested men that are in it. I have found a few disinterested men. I wish I had found more. I can name two or three men with whom I have conferred again and again and again, and I have never caught them by any inadvertence thinking about themselves or their own interests, and I tie to those men as you would tie to an anchor. I tie to them as you would tie to the voices of conscience if you could be sure that you always heard them."

And as the psalmists expect their blessings to serve others, so they pray to be kept steady for the sake of others. The two feelings blend in the 69th psalm, which is one long cry of a man who knows he is in danger of giving way under the pull of his own sin and also of the opposition of men who are against him. "Let not them that wait for thee be put to shame through me, O Lord Jehovah of hosts; let not those that seek thee be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel" (69:6). And it does not matter whether he is pleading for fair treatment at Jehovah's hands, as some think, or for strength to stand up to the strain without giving way, as seems more likely; in either case he has a keen sense of the social results that are awaiting his experiences. *Did you never set out to talk with a friend about the claims of religion, only to have your mouth shut by the failure of some obviously religious man known to you both?* And have you never found yourself the only Christian in a group and felt a heavy burden of responsibility for what you said and did because you knew they would judge the whole class of Christians by you?

It is a familiar feeling in other lines. Athletes contest for their college, not for themselves alone. Most of the criticisms of college life are based on the actions of a few students whom the critic has known or read about. It is no jest that a student everywhere represents his college. When a student wearing a college badge was seen in a questionable resort a group of the other students went to him and took off his colors, one of them saying that he was perfectly free, so far as they were concerned, to be there himself, but he could not take the rest of them there with him if they could

help it. Could that be done, in your judgment, properly? An old man, writing in the 71st psalm, asked to be kept safe until he could tell to the next generation what life had meant to him. He counted himself bound in the same bundle of life with other generations. No man ever holds steady for himself alone; other people are steady because he is.

III

So these psalmists *saw life as a plan of God for service.* The historical psalms tell the story of an overruling hand that was setting men up and taking them down in the interest of social need. Joseph had his experiences because they were needed in the service of his group, and they moved on under the will of God (105:17-21). Moses and Aaron were not on their own errand, but on the mission of service (105:26). David was taken from the sheepfolds for the sake of the work he was to do (78:70-72). Everywhere appears the perennial mystery of the sacrifice which the individual makes for the group and then the group for the whole. Vicarious suffering is everywhere, and vicarious suffering has always to be voluntary. So it is here. As soon as these writers see it, they rejoice in it for themselves and their children. They show the same feeling about their joy; it must be shared. The 24th psalm is commonly counted to have been written for the time when David had the ark of God brought from the home of Obed-edom to Jerusalem, when the account says he danced before the Lord with all his might, full of enthusiasm and joy. Dean Stanley ("History of the Jewish Church," Vol. II, p. 94) says it was "the greatest day of his life." But one of the obvious beauties of the psalm is its construction for antiphonal use, voice answering to voice. There are times in life for solos, but there are times and there is music when one voice seems wholly inadequate. Quartets are out of place in the Hallelujah Chorus. Self asks to be lost in the whole at such times. It lives for the group. Men who have not known such times are to be pitied.

One essential mark of a man's real life work is that it supplies the greatest need the man can see which he has the capacity to supply. Until he finds that work, he may have a "job" and may be making a living; but when he thinks in

such large terms, he begins to do a man's work. Figures are current which indicate that 97 per cent of all business men in America fail at some time in their business career. Most of them recover and make at least measurable successes, but the majority who fail do it because they are misfits. They have not found their place and often the failure shows them their place. No man is in his place until he can realize himself as supplying part of the real need of the world. Robert Louis Stevenson said there are only two just reasons for the choice of any way in life; "the first is inbred taste in choosing, the second some high utility in the industry selected." It is that high utility that gives a man the largest sense of the value of life. Along with it is the feeling of fellowship with other men in doing his life work. One's brethren and companions have a good deal to do with enthusiasm in service (*122*:8). They constitute an added motive for activity (*22*:*22*). "The American laborer who does his work feeling that he is a partner will do a third more work in a day than laborers will in other countries where the fight-psychology possesses the people, and where employers and employes are all busy in fighting each other's interests in the shops, and going home at night to hold meetings to think how to fight better in the morning" (Gerald Stanley Lee, "We," p. 562).

But we have had in America in recent years a merchant whose life was lived on this basis—Mr. Robert C. Ogden, leader in the Southern Education Board. "In the best sense of the word he was an organization man, always working with the structural elements in the life of the community. He was a man who had learned to work in harness, but he believed in the kind of harness that would give each man scope to pull his best." His biography is written in a book, but it is more fully written in the service he rendered with his life, finding a need and gathering around him a body of people who could be inspired to help in supplying it and then giving himself generously to it.

Nor must we let this seem apart from our religion. It is God who sets the solitary in families and who demands that each life take its share of the world's load. The sense of the psalmists that the great men of their history were only working out a plan has sustained many a man in smaller place since that time. Feeling God's concern in the social group

which we are set to serve is no affectation, but a very real inspiration. James Russell Lowell said that Wendell Phillips

"Saw God standing upon the weaker side;
. . . Therefore he went
And humbly joined him to the weaker part,
Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content
So he could be the nearer to God's heart,
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood
Through all the widespread veins of endless good."

The attributes of the true member of the society of God's choice in the 72nd psalm are almost all social, and when we serve the needs of the group we are serving Him to whom our goodness cannot extend. Jesus' forecast of the future and the attitude which eternal justice will take toward human life is all connected with service or neglect of service of the needy here (Matt. 25:31-46). The moral of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner is deeply true:

"He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Starting with the case of Thomas Sumner given in the Comment for the Week, try to work out some general principles which will help to determine when a man may serve the social group best by leaving a bad situation rather than by remaining in it to resist the evil in it.

Think over your campus or community and see some of the special lines of unselfish service now being followed, or followed in the past and productive now. This may help to make living for the group a more normal thing.

CHAPTER VII

The Challenge of the Social Order

In this study we pass from thought of the social group nearest to us, the group of our own kind, to a wider field, that social order which includes our own and all other groups and which is steadily being broadened in the minds of thoughtful men until it carries with it the burden of responsibility for all men. It was forecast centuries ago by a Latin poet who said, "I am a man, and I count nothing that pertains to humanity alien to myself." But his thought of humanity was not so wide as that of Jesus, who set the stakes for his disciples at the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8).

DAILY READINGS

Seventh Week, First Day

We have heard with our ears, O God,
Our fathers have told us,
What work thou didst in their days,
In the days of old.
Thou didst drive out the nations with thy hand;
But them thou didst plant:
Thou didst afflict the peoples;
But them thou didst spread abroad.
For they gat not the land in possession by their own sword,
Neither did their own arm save them;
But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance,
Because thou wast favorable unto them.
Thou art my King, O God:
Command deliverance for Jacob. —**Psalm 44: 1-4.**

What attitude ought we to take toward the past, specially that part of the social order which has come most directly to our own lives? We do not like talk of "the good old days," nor suggestions that the golden age is past. Do you

like the citizens of your town to tell very often how much better the earlier days were in the place? But neither do we like the contemptuous dismissal of the past which is common now, as college students do not like alumni to depreciate the early conditions under which they were trained. Mr. Gladstone once spoke of the conditions of the present as differing from a better early time. An opponent challenged him to say what earlier time he meant, and when Mr. Gladstone mentioned two centuries ago, said, "Oh, yes; the time when they burned witches!" The answer was rather shrewd than satisfactory, for at the point of Mr. Gladstone's contention those times might have been better. There are bad items in any past period, but there are good items too. Part of our history challenges us to our finest lives. God has been plainly in it and there are obligations on us who have inherited it. In the latter part of the psalm is frank acknowledgment of failure. *As for yourself, are you the kind of American you ought to be in loyalty to the history of America? Are you living by the best of it? And as a Christian are you as fine as you ought to be in view of the history of the Christian faith?* The social order which we have inherited challenges us.

Seventh Week, Second Day

If we have forgotten the name of our God,
Or spread forth our hands to a strange God;
Will not God search this out?
For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?
Arise, cast us not off for ever.
Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
And forgettest our affliction and our oppression?
For our soul is bowed down to the dust:
Our body cleaveth unto the earth.
Rise up for our help,
And redeem us for thy lovingkindness' sake.
—Psalm 44: 20-26.

The admission of the presence of evils in the social order, running through the rank and file of us, is always easy, so easy that we can jest about them. Some of us even talk about

evils as inevitable; they continue if men are in social relations at all. There has never been a wrong done among men which was not described by some people as belonging in the nature of things, to continue "as long as men are men." The logic of that we hardly realize, for it means that evils are essential to a moral order, and that some men have to be immoral so that other men may be moral, which is monstrous in a rational to say nothing of a moral order, whatever philosophy supports it. *The existence of a social order cannot require the existence of the things that make it impossible.* And the worst feature of the acceptance of social disorders as necessary is that it cuts the nerve of our opposition to them. A prime requisite of a helpful place in the social order is that these evils shall hurt us, that we shall recognize the inevitable punishment which they bring on any social order. Mordecai believed in God strongly enough to expect that deliverance would come for Israel in some other way if Esther did not do her share toward deliverance, but he saw plainly enough that she could not escape by standing aside (Esther 4:14). *God may be able to take care of the social order without us, but what ought to come to us if we stand aside and let it go without our care?*

Seventh Week, Third Day

Come, and see the works of God;
He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.
He turned the sea into dry land;
They went through the river on foot:
There did we rejoice in him.
He ruleth by his might for ever;
His eyes observe the nations:
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.
Oh bless our God, ye peoples,
And make the voice of his praise to be heard;
Who holdeth our soul in life,
And suffereth not our feet to be moved.
For thou, O God, hast proved us:
Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.—Psalm 66: 5-10.

Pessimists are men who either do not see the saving forces at work in society or do not believe in their effectiveness. They see the 5,000 hungry people so clearly that they either overlook the presence of five loaves and two fishes or else

think of the absurdity of setting them over against the need (Matt. 14:15-21). Forces of evil are generally more strident and conspicuous than any others. They constitute "news" and furnish more attractive centers for the play of imagination than anything else. So the social order seems to many good people doomed. To people who do not try to be good people, the only way to approve the present order is to adopt a lower standard of social requirement and be satisfied with attaining it. Anything more looks like dreams of Utopia. But that leaves out God. Atheists have to whistle steadily to keep up courage and a high ideal at the same time, and they have to do it whether they are speculative atheists like Clifford or practical atheists like many Christians who believe that God exists but do not expect him to count largely in common affairs. Without God, the forces of evil often look greater than forces for good. Only eyes open to see his forces can understand the situation (II Kings 6:15-17). *It does not take as many good people to save a situation as it takes bad people to ruin it.* Sodom would not have needed a majority vote to keep it from destruction (Genesis 18); a small body of the right kind of people could have done it. Are you one, at least, of that group, large or small?

Seventh Week, Fourth Day

Social wrongs of all sorts are to be set down as folly. Falsehood, unfairness between man and man, injustice, exploitation of the weak, are only seemingly shrewd; they are actually foolish, and the universe, God's universe, is against folly wherever it appears. Children cannot be worked in mines and mills without more cost than gain to the social order. Men who use up their capital may make a good showing, but the nature of things is against them, and the nature of things always takes right of way when it is ready. A social order cannot use up its capital without paying for it in God's universe. No land can be glorious until it has a controlling group of people who hold right relation to God and his moral order. *It need not be the majority; no evil was ever yet corrected until a moral minority had shown how readily one can chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight.* Are you ready to be one of the minority *that can get God's will done?*

I will hear what God Jehovah will speak:
For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints:
But let them not turn again to folly.
Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him,
That glory may dwell in our land.
Mercy and truth are met together:
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
Truth springeth out of the earth:
And righteousness hath looked down from heaven.
Yea, Jehovah will give that which is good:
And our land shall yield its increase.
Righteousness shall go before him,
And shall make his footsteps a way to walk in.
—Psalm 85: 8-13.

The harmony of virtues in the sound social order is well worded here. Mercy and truth—not mercy that is flabby and false because it cannot bear to be honest; not truth that is brutal because it must be candid. Righteousness and peace—not righteousness that keeps up a continual and unnecessary strife for strife's sake; not peace that asks only quiet at any cost. So far as you know the social order around yourself, which of the virtues is more needed today?

Seventh Week, Fifth Day

There is no abstract righteousness, no abstract justice. Only moral beings can hold moral relations or display moral traits. If the essential factors of the universe are moral ones, it is because there is a moral Being whose throne is founded on them.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne:
Lovingkindness and truth go before thy face.
Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound:
They walk, O Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance.
In thy name do they rejoice all the day;
And in thy righteousness are they exalted.
For thou art the glory of their strength;
And in thy favor our horn shall be exalted.
For our shield belongeth unto Jehovah;
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.
—Psalm 89: 14-18.

As people make up the social order, so their traits are at the last the only ones the social order has. Gustave Le Bon long ago showed that the crowd displays traits and adopts practices that no single person in the crowd all by himself would display or adopt; but that only means that men in pronounced social relations release certain restraints which are on them in purely personal conditions. The traits of the crowd are actually the traits of the people who make it up, magnified or deflected by the presence of others. And there will be no change in the traits of the crowd until some of the men in it, perhaps only one man if he is strong enough, set out to have things different. Somebody has to care before cruelty ceases in our penal system. Somebody has to hate dishonesty before truth becomes regnant. It is in the triumph of such people that a social order is safe, for in their triumph God gains his victory. The final defence of any nation is its relation to God. Several of the psalms speak of God as the rock and fortress, or the strength and shield of nations. Here the saying is different. The nation has its shield, but it belongs to God (so also 47:9, where the shields of the whole earth are ascribed to him); it has its king, but he is a vassal of the Holy One. All defences run back for effectiveness to God.

Seventh Week, Sixth Day

What man is he that desireth life,
And loveth many days, that he may see good?
Keep thy tongue from evil,
And thy lips from speaking guile.
Depart from evil, and do good;
Seek peace, and pursue it.
The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous,
And his ears are open unto their cry.
The face of Jehovah is against them that do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
—Psalm 34: 12-16.

Here is a condensed program for an abiding life. It breaks into detail the vaguer words righteousness and mercy which we have noted already. The program is not merely for permanence, but leads to a climax of good. Some lives are not worth continuing; they constitute one of the problems of

immortality. Once in a while a man declares he does not care for a future life; this one has been more than enough for him. Do you consider the declaration wholly genuine? Is there any man who does not desire life, or is it only certain things in life that he does not desire? Are suicides trying to escape life or only some apparently unavoidable conditions in life? All the items of this program are social and affect our widest relations. The first one illustrates that. What we say goes farther than anything we do. Maintaining communication with men on the basis of righteousness and honesty is a first necessity in the widening circle of modern life. Less and less can the social order be maintained on the basis of legal documents, safeguarded against the dishonesty of men. We are having to trust each other more and more. The existence of a few men who cannot be trusted when their word is passed is an annoyance to the larger body of men who are keeping their tongues from evil and their lips from deceit. Letting evil alone and doing good is an item that comes more slowly, but the social order is waiting for safety until it does come. The whole world has recently been pleading for men in large and small relations who love peace enough to go after it. Would not this program fit into present needs to a nicety?

Seventh Week, Seventh Day

One generation shall laud thy works to another,
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
Of the glorious majesty of thine honor,
And of thy wondrous works, will I meditate.
And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts;
And I will declare thy greatness.
They shall utter the memory of thy great goodness,
And shall sing of thy righteousness.
Jehovah is gracious, and merciful;
Slow to anger, and of great lovingkindness.
Jehovah is good to all;
And his tender mercies are over all his works.
All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah;
And thy saints shall bless thee.

—Psalm 145: 4-10.

There are two extensions of our thought of the social order that are specially worth making in our day. The race is

integrated more and more in space, around the world. All men of all races are factors in it. It is not because they are Americans or Europeans or Asiatics, but because they are men, that they have to do with each other. There are doubtless some fairly deep-running differences, but the unities of the race, clear underneath the surface, are the things that are emerging more and more. Men who talk of the impossibility of races understanding each other are behind the times. East and West may not meet at some points, but there is "neither border nor breed nor birth" when strong men meet "though they come from the ends of the earth." They find a deep unity in their common relation to God, whose tender mercies are over all his works, and not over only some of them. And that integration has time relations also, runs backwards and forwards. The social order is a product of generations past and is producing itself anew for the generations yet to come. We cannot understand any tree without some knowledge of its roots, nor without some knowledge of its fruits. All of us are posterity and all of us are ancestors. And over it all, both in space and time, is God, being obeyed or disregarded, but never inactive in it. Jesus saw the natural order wholly under his eye (Matt. 6:26-30; 10:29), and argued from it to his constant care for the human order as well (Matt. 5:45, etc.). We are to conceive of the right social order as one in which God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. We help toward that order when we do his will ourselves.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

I

The widening of the sense of social responsibility is one of the interesting studies of history. It begins with a feeling for the community, the small group, whose interests are thought of not as held in common with the larger group, but as in opposition to it. The few are bound together against the many. That is the cut-throat competitive spirit of some fields of operation today. In political history the community was gradually widened to include states, still small, but with sufficiently unified interests to make them willing to stand

together against wider opposition. The forming of the United States, or of the British or German Empire, illustrates the spread of the spirit of fellowship and responsibility. That it was not easy to make this wider responsibility real to the rank and file of people, our own early history and the efforts of Bismarck plainly show. It was counted quite impossible that a group of people could be trusted to have any other than selfish motives. Plenty of sapient people still insist that the principle holds good. They want to know first of all what their own particular group is to expect out of any general proposal. Congressional trades between sections, you-vote-for-my-bill-and-I-will-vote-for-your-bill, are remnants of that same spirit. And this larger union into a kind of magnified state is as far as most of us have gotten.

When the next and inevitable step is proposed, we have the same old arguments against it that have been urged against every advance of the past. But the step is sure to be taken by some approaching generation if we refuse to take it. As we have advanced from the community to the state and from the state to the nation, we must go on from the nation to the world. We must learn that the interests of all men are involved in the one social order, that national interests are not to be held in opposition to the interests of other nations but in fellowship with them. We have learned it in ethics and in communities, in spite of the very protests now raised against the fuller proposal of the Christian spirit. An American statesman has voiced it for us by saying, "Here is the world humanity has made. Will you take full citizenship in it? It is a large world and a round world, and men grow human by seeing all its play of force and folly."

Of this larger sense of the total social order there are only shadowy traces in the psalms, but it is not lacking. It shows in the feeling that the heathen are under Jehovah's power as truly as Israel. The gods of the heathen are idols (96:5); Jehovah is the only true God for the world. Because he is God, all the peoples of the world are to rejoice (97:1, 6; 47:1-9; 67:4). Other nations may oppose his chosen people and his plans, but they cannot prosper in it (66:3; 108:7-9); indeed, what they do is merely amusing to God, who has set his king on his throne already (2:4-6). And the time will come when all nations will gladly recognize his lordship over them (68:31; 47:8, 9; 87:4-6). Meanwhile, all men

everywhere are included in the works of Jehovah (103:22; 150:6). The psalms come from a troubled time, and the surrounding nations are thought of generally as enemies who wish harm to Israel. There is a constant sense of invasion either as having just occurred (85) or as imminent (79). And yet the invasion of the nations then was as nothing to the invasion which the whole world is receiving now, every nation seeming to overflow upon every other nation.

II

The moral conditions which must obtain in the larger social order are only those with which we are already familiar in every well constructed social group. *Fundamentally, the social order must be made moral in practice as it is in God's purpose.* Otherwise it is not worthy of God's world. Fra Lippo Lippi spoke for many when he said:

> "This world's no blot for us,
> Nor blank; it means intensely and it means good;
> To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

Yet only moral beings can be moral, and the very existence of the social order is a challenge to us who live in the midst of it, to be and do our best in its behalf. Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace (85:10) are the foundation virtues, and only men can realize them. The social order may lack any one of them. What is the largest lack of our penal system, if it is not mercy? Thirty years ago the jailer answered me when I commented on the hard conditions of the prison at Blackwell's Island, "Well, young feller, these men ain't here as a reward of merit." That is a legitimate reminder, and we will not gain by making our penal system soft and infirm. But the new methods of treating offenders deserve a trial, since the old methods have failed so dismally to check crime or to change criminals. Mercy that is righteous will not be flabby and ineffective. What is the largest lack of our industrial relations, if it is not justice? Justice on both sides, of course, rigid righteousness shot through with fraternal regard on both sides. In the beginning of a labor controversy on the Pacific coast in the summer of

1916, Secretary Wilson wrote to the officers of a labor union whose men were accused of violating a definite contract in quitting work: "The American labor union has built up an enviable reputation for living up to its contracts, even when it has had to forego temporary advantages in order to do so. No union can long exert an influence for good which deliberately violates its contracts for temporary gain. The average working man has little else to lose than his honor and integrity; when that is gone, he is in a very sorry plight indeed." Every man, employer or laborer, is in a sorry plight without the justice which establishes the social order. And it was this injustice which employers can show toward laborers that so stirred Amos that he pronounced one of his most terrible prophecies against it (Amos 8:4-10), a feeling that is shared by the psalmists in many expressions.

Or take the social problem of child labor, which John Spargo calls "the bitter cry of the children." Here the lack is again of those fundamental moral virtues which must be enforced on unwilling men and practiced by all willing ones. Or the evil which John Penman calls "the challenge of the Church"—poverty. It is a complicated problem, which only light thinkers dismiss with a wave of the hand. Once we said with all confidence that no man is poor but the man who deserves to be because of some personal defect; but that is not true today. There are social forces involved which are actually not under individual control. The corrective of those forces is, again, these same moral virtues which we must practice if we are willing and propagate among those who are not willing until they win their way, until they have power as they already have authority.

But moral the order must become because God is concerned with it. The psalmists are perfectly clear on that. Whims do not count and nothing is arbitrary. When wrongs occur, they are very mystifying, but there is no sort of doubt of God's power, when his plan is ready, to take hold on them and crush or cure. Wicked men flourish like a green tree in its native soil, but they disappear, for all that (37:35, 36). Looking out on the world is baffling, no doubt, because evil seems to prosper, but if one will go to the sanctuary and get a renewed sense of God, things look very different (73: 16-22). The very purpose of God's dealing with men is that they may keep his statutes and observe his laws (105:

45). The issue of the battle is not in the slightest doubt. Unless we want utter defeat for our projects, we must bring them into submission to moral demands.

Every one of us has to take sides in that fight and give account in the Day of the Lord. Standing aside may be worse than taking part on the wrong side. The Jewish Talmud teaches that a secret sin is an impertinent attempt to oust God from the universe—it implies that something can be done where he does not see it, or else that it does not matter if he does see it. It contains a law declaring that a thief should be punished more severely than a robber, because the robber treats God and man alike, defying both openly, while the thief is afraid of men, but not afraid of God. Not helping to make the social order a moral one is acting as though it does not matter what kind of order there is in God's world. It is disregarding him and his rights. Dante tells in the opening part of the Inferno that he saw outside the gates of hell a wailing company, denied entrance everywhere and doomed to misery and isolation wherever they were. He asked who they could be and was told that they were the people who on earth had never been willing to take sides on anything except with a view to their own interests. They were the pusillanimous, who had let great causes go unbefriended while looking out for their own safety and comfort. They had responded to no challenge of their social order. And here in the place where moral balances were struck, they had no place. Hell could not admit them lest the damned get glory from them; they had no virtue which purgatory could bring out; heaven could not admit them for lack of any value. They had stood aside. And moral judgment accounts Dante right in his placing of them. They are useless in the universe.

III

The psalmists feel not merely the inspiration of their history but its challenge. Men with such a history as they had could not in fairness be just any kind of men they might happen to care to be. And since we inherit all the history there is, inherit it increasingly as the world becomes the home of us all, whatever our race, the challenge of history is on us all. The historical psalms are a wise way of binding

the nation into unity with its past. History can always be sung better than it can be read. Psalms like the 105th and 106th and 78th constitute a challenge to the people of the latter day. So does every telling of the story of a nation. We are not isolated units. We are in a stream that comes to us heavily freighted. Our social order has the labor of the ages in it, and we cannot in moral fairness act as though we were beginning anew.

The evils which we have inherited demand our correction. We are not to take them for granted or to act as though they must remain. *There are no necessary evils in a world where God is and where there are people enough to take their stand against them.* Man does not need to oppress man "beneath God's liberal sun." Corruption in politics is not a necessity of human relationship. Dishonesty and self-seeking in commerce are not inherent in trade. Nothing that is wrong has any claim to immortality in the social order. Evil men furnish their own doom (37:12-13). Their weapons cut their own hands. Every bad man is holding the blade end of his sword and when he strikes with it, his own blood flows. The things that ruin are doomed and the social order challenges us as God's believers to see to their ending.

So the heroisms of history challenge us to be worthy of them. Moses and Aaron are still factors in life (99:6). Joseph and David are part of our example. The things that happened to the fathers happened for our example and God used them to prepare the way for the better things in store for us (Heb. 11:40). Men have died for the things which are now matters of course to us. Careless acceptance of such sacrifices is eminently unworthy. If there is anything to us, anything fine, anything inherently heroic, it is challenged by the virtues of the social order which we have inherited.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

A paper recently said: "The sooner we recognize that nations are like individuals in having only selfish motives, the sooner we will reach safe international relations." Is that your opinion? A recent political speaker said: "Not America first, but America only." Consider this sentiment.

As you see the social order of today, is its chief weakness a lack of mercy or of truth, of justice or of gentleness?

CHAPTER VIII

The Group Within the Social Order

DAILY READINGS

Eighth Week, First Day

There will always be groups within groups and there always should be. There are intimacies which enrich life but which cannot be very widely extended. This exquisite little psalm suggests how much it means to have these inner groups bound closely together. It seems to have been born out of some experience of reunion, when an old division had been healed, and everyone was rejoicing that the trouble was over and brothers were brotherly again.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard;
That came down upon the skirt of his garments;
Like the dew of Hermon,
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion:
For there Jehovah commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore.

—Psalm 133.

No divisions run deeper or are more hurtful than those within groups whose bonds are naturally most intimate. Family quarrels, community quarrels, church quarrels are the bitterest of all because they tear the closest ties. *And the very first service any man can render to the social order is to see to it that the social group of which he is part is kept right within itself.* Men who want to see the whole Christian Church united will not help it by splitting their own

denomination, but by developing within it a spirit of unity. College spirit cannot be corrected while society spirit is divided. The inner groups are not to be maintained for their own sakes, and the time may come with any one of them when it ought to be abandoned, but while it exists it ought to be kept right within. The two figures used suggest the method of such unity. The oil was poured on Aaron's head (Lev. 8:12), but it ran with its fragrance and sanctifying influence to his feet. The dew gathered first on Hermon, but it was blown by the currents of air down on lower Mount Zion because it had gathered on the higher peak. This unity comes from the top down. Where do you stand in your social group? If you are at the top, your duty is clear; if you are not there, ought you not to be?

Eighth Week, Second Day

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee,
That he may dwell in thy courts:
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,
Thy holy temple.
By terrible things thou wilt answer us in righteousness,
O God of our salvation;
Thou that art the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of them that are afar off upon the sea:
Who by his strength setteth fast the mountains,
Being girded about with might;
Who stilleth the roaring of the seas,
The roaring of their waves,
And the tumult of the peoples.
They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens:
Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

—Psalm 65:4-8.

Notice the broadening of thought in the opening part of this passage. First, singular number—*the man* whom Thou choosest; then, plural—*we* shall be satisfied; then, universal —all the ends of the earth. That is the direction the movement ought to take—an individual fitting into a group for the sake of the whole. Note a similar extension in three New Testament verses: Who loved *me* (Gal. 2:20), Who

loveth *us* (Rev. 1:5), so loved the *world* (John 3:16). How many of the groups to which you belong provoke that kind of movement? Your church, your college society, your club, has taken you into it as an individual. Does it give you a sense of larger responsibility or does it seem to exist for its own sake? Are you of any importance in your group; is your group of any importance to the social order? The unity of the movement is found in the relation of all of it to God, who maintains the conditions under which it is possible. Jesus gathered individuals into a group of twelve and a few more, and then gave them a sense of world relations, because they held relation personally and as a group to him. Notice also the nouns: goodness, righteousness, confidence, strength. How do these elements enter into the service which a group can render to the whole? If any group holds right relation to God, is it not sure to contribute at least one of these traits to the social order?

Eighth Week, Third Day

Not unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us,
But unto thy name give glory,
For thy lovingkindness, and for thy truth's sake.
Wherefore should the nations say,
Where is now their God?
But our God is in the heavens:
He hath done whatsoever he pleased. . . .
Jehovah hath been mindful of us; he will bless us:
He will bless the house of Israel;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
He will bless them that fear Jehovah,
Both small and great.

—Psalm 115:1-3, 12, 13.

Here is a writer with a keen sense of the difference between the group to which he belongs and the surrounding groups in the social order of the world. He feels the superiority of his group, its higher ideals, its finer purposes, its greater strength. There need be no sin or false pride in that. It would be affectation of humility for some groups not to know that much about themselves, even though they may wisely say as little about it as the writer does here. There are college groups that are better than others; there are

community groups superior to others; there are family strains finer than others; there are churches more effective than others. Recognizing that is merely being honest. Yet anybody knows the danger of it.

Being self-important about superiority reveals lack of sense of humor, which is the power to see things in their right proportion. This psalm sees things as they are. Later in it, there runs a contrast between the idols of the inferior races and the God of the Hebrews. One soldier said to another, "Change generals with us, and we will fight as well as you do." The world might say to Christendom, "Change gods with us and we will lead as you lead."

Eighth Week, Fourth Day

If it had not been Jehovah who was on our side,
Let Israel now say,
If it had not been Jehovah who was on our side,
When men rose up against us;
Then they had swallowed us up alive,
When their wrath was kindled against us:
Then the waters had overwhelmed us,
The stream had gone over our soul;
Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
Blessed be Jehovah,
Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
Our help is in the name of Jehovah,
Who made heaven and earth.

—Psalm 124.

Here is a group that has had to stand for itself against the larger forces of the other groups about it. It is a psalm of some notable national deliverance. The saying that God is on the side of the heaviest guns is not true. The Covenanters of Scotland, the Huguenots of France, the Waldenses of Italy have outlasted the larger forces that were against them. *The persistence of moral minorities is a perfectly familiar fact of history.* The Hebrews themselves, when they were a factor in Eastern history, are a good illustration of the way in which a small group with inherent value can persist in spite of tremendous odds against them. *We tell*

ourselves to be sure we are right and then to go ahead. If any group will see to it that it is right, God will see to it that it goes ahead. We need to keep that in mind when we take our places in groups that have hard tasks before them, groups like reform agencies or societies for the correction of any abuses. They have a hard row before them, doubtless; it seems in the plan of the world that things worth doing should have elements of difficulty about them; but a moral minority is still the biggest force in any situation. It does not get swallowed up when floods rise out of the social order. The universe, God's universe, is with it. Lincoln's saying about being on God's side of questions is profoundly true.

Eighth Week, Fifth Day

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive required of us songs,
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing Jehovah's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her skill.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

—Psalm 137: 1-6.

A bit from an exile psalm. The danger here was that the identity of the group might be swallowed up in the larger and less worthy whole that surrounded it. There are doubtless times when a group has rendered its service and ought to be absorbed into the order which it has made sufficiently like itself. But when men do honestly stand for something which is essential, then it demands courage to maintain their separateness for that purpose. Yielding vital things for the sake of accommodation to surroundings is easy—and ruinous. Jesus spoke of the possibility of salt losing its saltness,

the very thing that distinguished it from its surroundings, in which case it had to be treated like its surroundings; it had become like dirt, let it be trampled on like dirt (Matt. 5:13). If college graduates are unwilling to maintain the ideals that distinguish their group and prefer to settle down to the drab life from which they ought to be distinguished, it is no wonder that so many people think there is nothing in a college education. If a church adopts practices common to the unchristian life about it, and refuses to maintain its distinctive features in religion, the world will refuse to see any particular meaning in religion. Here also arises the question about denominations among Christians. How far are they justified and when does one of them lose the right to exist? Is your own denomination serving a sufficiently distinctive purpose to justify its permanence, or has it caught the color of all the rest?

Eighth Week, Sixth Day

Oh give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon his name;
Make known among the peoples his doings.
Sing unto him, sing praises unto him;
Talk ye of all his marvellous works.
Glory ye in his holy name:
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek Jehovah.
Seek ye Jehovah and his strength;
Seek his face evermore.
Remember his marvellous works that he hath done,
His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth,
O ye seed of Abraham his servant,
Ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
He is Jehovah our God:
His judgments are in all the earth.

—Psalm 105: 1-7.

Here is an abiding sense of mission. The group does not exist for itself or its own glory, but for "all the peoples" and the glory of the forces of God which have made it what it is. There are no favorites whom God wishes to bless while he prefers to neglect others. Probably most of the writers of the psalms did not see it so clearly as we can see it in the logic of their writings, but one of their devoted believers saw it years after under the influence of Jesus, when he declared that he could now see that God is no respecter of

persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him (Acts 10:35, 36). There had been no change in God since the earliest times. He had blessed men who feared him, so that men everywhere might learn to fear him. When men had sought him, he responded, so that men everywhere might seek him. That is actually the way history works. No nation wins freedom without writing a story for other nations, seeking freedom, to read—not to imitate, but to emulate. In the movement for larger liberty in China the names of Washington and Cavour and Garibaldi were much on the lips of young men. No city ever worked out a civic problem or corrected an evil without helping other cities to do the same thing. No community ever developed along right lines without suggesting better things to other communities. The group helps the order.

Eighth Week, Seventh Day

God be merciful unto us, and bless us,
And cause his face to shine upon us;
That thy way may be known upon earth,
Thy salvation among all nations.
Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
Let all the peoples praise thee.
Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy;
For thou wilt judge the peoples with equity,
And govern the nations upon earth. . . .
The earth hath yielded its increase:
God, even our own God, will bless us.
God will bless us;
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.
—Psalm 67:1-4, 6, 7.

Here the vicarious blessing is emphasized strongly. God is asked to be merciful to *us*, to bless *us*, to cause his face to shine on *us*, not for our own sakes, but that his way may be known on earth and his salvation among all nations. There is a note of arrogance in the calm way in which we often appropriate our blessings, as though they had caught on the hooks of our merits and could not get loose. Nations are important, but not so important as the world, and when a nation is blessed, it is only poor national pride that leads its people to think that the blessing is intended finally for itself

alone. There is plenty of that. Note it in the contemptuous attitude taken by so many people toward those of other nations. In a smaller way it is noticeable in inner groups in a college. Intercollegiate victories are taken as victories of a society or of some little coterie, instead of the victories of the whole. The society comes to think of itself in terms of itself and not of the whole, in whose behalf it should have won its victories. God's hand is large enough to hold blessings for the world. His method is to use the inner group as a channel of blessing for the whole and as argument to the whole for loyalty to him.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Every social group, whether arbitrary or natural, is part of the social order and holds relation to the whole. The "whole" which it serves may be only relatively larger than itself and in turn an element in a larger group, for no group of any sort can draw a line around itself without touching other groups and entering into some sort of relation to them. And all such groups carry a measure of responsibility for the whole of which they are part. For one thing, no group of any sort, natural or artificial, can be maintained except by using the energy of its members. The reason so many societies of various sorts fail in college or communities or in larger circles is that there are not enough people who are willing to give time and strength to them. Any society can live if a small group of people will pay the price for it. Jesus risked a whole world plan on a mere handful of people who could be brought to think so much of the project that it would not occur to them to let it die. That is one of the large reasons why his project has not died, in spite of plenty of things that might have killed it. But if a group uses up the strength and power of members of the larger group, it ought in fairness to see to it that benefits return to that larger group in some way. That is only familiar social theory based on the Christian idea of human responsibility.

Looking back on Jewish history we can see how plainly it was God's thought that the Hebrews should be a group within the whole for the sake of the whole. Often the

people themselves no more saw that than little groups of people anywhere see their larger meaning. The Hebrews thought of themselves as having special value to God on their own account alone. Once in a while their prophets and singers saw the larger truth which they have taught all the rest of us. As children of Abraham they were to be blessed and through them all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Often in the psalms are hints of consciousness of the surrounding peoples as those who were yet to be brought to the same blessing as the Hebrews (65:4, 5; 67:1-4; 48:2, 10). They saw that the Hebrews were not the social order; they were a group within that order and they were meant to face outward toward that order and be a blessing to it. That they should have seen the purpose in all its fulness is hardly to have been expected, and it waited for men like Paul and Peter and John who had been under the spell of Christ to see it. Even so, we have been slow enough to catch such a vision. The smug way in which we accept blessings as belonging to us for some supposed merit abiding in us suggests how much we have still to learn.

I

The demand that the group maintain itself for the sake of the service it has to render appears in all the exile psalms. The peril which these more thoughtful men faced was that they might be lost in the new surroundings and lose the identity which constituted their value to the order. They recalled the time in earlier history when that very thing had occurred and the nation had suffered for it. It was in the settlement days in Canaan (106:34-42), and they did not keep themselves from the evils about them, but gradually yielded to them, and like salt that had lost its saltiness they were trampled under foot. These exilic singers saw the danger that they might be tarred with the pitch of their surroundings. They were compelled to mix with their captors, yet they were to retain the essential thing that made them a people. They had to live in the world but keep unspotted from it (James 1:27). All the exile psalms bear testimony to the distress of a group sharply out of place in a social order where they are trying to keep right.

It will always be difficult for some of us to understand the depression and dejection that marks these exilic psalms. The Hebrews were not bound slaves, not slaves at all in our usual sense of the word. They were not confined, they were not impoverished. Instead, they became officials, like Daniel and his three friends, like Nehemiah and doubtless many others. Some of them certainly became rich and prosperous, and many of these settled down contentedly and never discussed returning to their land. Yet many of them, on the other hand, pined for the land from which they had been carried away. Why could they not be contented? Partly it was for love of liberty. A white man met a negro some years after the war, a negro plainly poor and ill-kept though hardworking, and asked him if he did not regret his release from slavery; he was now hungry at times, then he always had food; he had poor clothing now, then he was clothed with all he needed; now he had only a hut to shelter him, then he had a far better cabin. The negro waved it all aside: "No, sah; Ah doan regrets it; de place is dere yet and you-all kin have it if you-all wants it; Ah wants to be free." There are people who will say, "The more fool he," but other people will understand. Man does not live by bread alone. There are things which the soul demands which are not supplied by prosperity. It is this that underlies so much of the desire for reform, even in cities whose bank clearings are steadily increasing and whose streets are being paved by the mile each year. It is the pull of higher things, better education, finer home life, purer citizenship, that is felt by the group which must often stand against the reigning social order. The Hebrew exiles wanted some better things than prosperity.

But chiefly these men felt the shame of being in exile at all. They had failed God and they must have a chance to be true to him again. Study Daniel's prayer in his ninth chapter, or Nehemiah's in his first chapter or the 137th psalm, and it comes out that this is what hurt these finer souls. They had been given a place in the world, a place which the world needed to have them take, a place which God's plan needed to have them take, and they had failed the whole situation. They might never be able to go back to Jerusalem, but they meant to keep their desire for it alive (137:5, 6). *What a man can get is one thing; what he prefers is what makes him. Keep your preferences alive and your expe-*

riences will never narrow you. As Browning makes David say, not what we do, but what we would do, exalts us.

There is always danger of a group failing at that point. Many a society organized to protest against some abuse on a campus or in a community has presently slipped into the same evil against which it protested. It is hard not to capitalize our ideals, to make amusement with our highest hopes for people who have no such hopes and so to cheapen them for ourselves. The exiles were psychologically correct in refusing to sing their songs in Babylon to show mirth (137: 3, 4). No man can use his highest hopes for cheap purposes without sacrificing them. What is the actual effect of amateur plays that ridicule the supposed ideals of the town, that take off its religious or moral life? Do they make it easier to be sincerely religious and deeply honorable, or harder? And if such things result in the cheapening of life, that only illustrates again the fact that the group is easily overcome by its environment, taking the color of its surroundings. Salt has become common earth.

II

Maintaining this distinctive value is all the harder when we are surrounded with other groups which have the same responsibility and have abandoned it. The little 123rd psalm is one of the "songs of ascent," connected with the pilgrimages to Jerusalem undertaken under command of religious duty by all the pious Jews. Along the way were villages or settlements of various sizes whose people had only contempt for those who still followed so trying a custom. The pilgrims as they went on found themselves sneered at by others who ought themselves to have been on the pilgrimage. Their souls were exceedingly filled with the contempt of those who were at ease, who had abandoned the difficulties of duty and had only a sneer for others who persisted in them. Or else, those who sneered were the heathen settlers among whom they had to pass, who would condemn so stupid a custom as the pilgrimage. Few men, known to any considerable body of friends, ever persistently followed the custom of church going in a university or in a city without having to face the same thing. The name of the Methodist Church is

the outcome of fellow students' contempt for the group of Oxford students who persisted in being religious and maintaining their group testimony before the larger group.

At the root of such sneering is the desire for the easy way of living. Religion makes demands and they are irksome to some men. Once adopt the principle that one ought not to be asked to do anything he does not feel like doing, or that he ought to reduce such demands to the minimum, and you have the whole argument against religion in a phrase. Most men find it easier to lounge around a club Sunday morning than to go to church, easier to loaf and chat in negligee than to take a place in a committee or a Bible class, and they pity the poor dubs who do not see it so. And while there are always some men who can pass that off with a jest, it goes to the very roots of the matter with other men. It was not a sword that upset Peter and made him deny Christ; it was being quizzed by a servant girl (Mark 14:66-70). Most of us would rather be thought bad than foolish. We would rather be denounced than ridiculed. And it is under just such conditions that we have to be on our guard that we maintain the thing that makes our existence worth while. *Have you ever known any compromises in such things that have resulted well for either side of the difference?*

III

The difficulty is increased when those who are equipped for helping will not do so. The hint of the dereliction of Ephraim (78:9-11) is worth noticing: "The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." Ready for war, they left their brethren in the lurch. It is the defection of the equipped that endangers everything good in the world. The marvel is that good causes prosper as they do when so many of them go short-handed, while people armed and bearing bows turn back when the strain comes. College people are as faithful as the average, and yet there are enough college graduates, equipped to make great warfare against all the social evils, to win the victory ten times over, who have settled down into the comfortable ways of the world and are valueless when the need arises. They are not merely losses on their own ac-

count; they make everything harder for the men who keep in the thick of the fight. Hopes are built upon them which hurt when they fail.

IV

The largest group for social good ought to be the Church. We must oppose any effort to make social service a side issue of the Church's life. Speaking of it as a permissible duty, depending on whether strength and time are left after the gospel work is done, is sheer underreading of the terms of the Gospel. The old question persists as it did among the Hebrews: *Is the Church a body of people rescued from the world for their own sakes, blessed because God loves them peculiarly and alone; or is it a body of rescued people called together to do the work of rescuing, the whole earth to profit by God's blessing of them?* A refuge or a place of inspiration for world service—which is the Church? Is Mount Zion the home of the faithful nation or the joy of the whole earth (48:2)? And if it is for the whole earth, then for what phases of the life of the earth, for all of them or for only some of them?

Does it not make any difference to religion where and how a man works, whether children are educated or abused, whether immigrants are humanely or brutally treated, whether men live in houses or in warrens? Life is too closely interwoven in all its interests to be split up so that the Church may be exonerated from concern for the whole of it. Not as a side issue, but as part of its very central duty, the Church must take its relation to the larger social order within which it is placed. All the world and everything in the world is part of its business. Its line of care and its methods of correction will differ in different fields of need, but as a social group it must recognize its relation to the social order in God's world.

Jesus had in hand a great enterprise which even he did not attempt to accomplish alone. He had his own unique part to do, and that he did. But the enterprise itself was laid on social lines. At the very beginning he formed a group out of which the Church has grown. That group he set squarely down in the world, knowing what their dangers were and not asking to have them escape, but asking only that they be kept true to the task and in the spirit needed for

the enterprise. He wanted them to be salt that would stay salty, lights that would stay lighted, Christians who would stay Christian. In that spirit he turned them to the enterprise, setting the world before them as their field. When they fail or when evils come in the social group which they have thus far mastered, the shame is not theirs alone; it is the shame of the enterprise (79:9; 115:2). The worst thing about war in Christendom, or labor riots or drunkenness or harlotry, is not its inherent badness; it is the right it gives to non-Christian nations to sneer at the God whose worship we profess in Christendom. If this inner group of those who know Christ had kept themselves as they should, if they had pushed out their influence as they should, could these things have occurred?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Consider the mutual relations that should exist between a college society or fraternity or other inner group and the institution as a whole, constituting what we are here calling the social order. Go on to consider the relations that should exist between the institution considered as a social group and the general life of the world, conceived as a larger social order.

What is the result of conceiving these relations as one-sided?

Under what conditions would it be wise to serve the interests of the group even at the cost of the order, and when would the opposite course be wise? In general, so far as you have observed, which problem presents itself oftener?

CHAPTER IX

God in the Social Order

The writers of the psalms, like all the Hebrews of their times, have little to say about formal religion, and much to say about God, but they mean the same thing. To them religion was simply holding relation to God and religions were measured by the God to whom relation was held. Hegel's familiar statement of religion would have been fairly satisfactory to them: "Religion is a relation—a living and true connection between God and man."

DAILY READINGS

Ninth Week, First Day

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof.
There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God,
The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God will help her, and that right early.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
Jehovah of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. . . .
Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

—Psalm 46: 1-7, 10.

Probably the primary experience of anybody with the thought of God is of courage. The word itself is worth observing. Courage comes into the English language by way of the French *courage* from the Latin *cor*, and of course means that one has heart. Loss of courage means that one's heart has failed before some strain or hard experience. The first appeal of religion is to the heart. It does not draw its assurance from what goes on around one. Jesus said that the peace he gave is not given as the world gives it (John 14:27), for he wanted to make our hearts untroubled, while the world would like to make our surroundings undisturbed. *The great service that religion can render us is to make us sure even when chaos reigns in our surroundings. Many things can happen, this psalm says, but the failure of God cannot happen.* And the psalm does not suggest that we need to look for this evidence merely in some personal experience; we can have it regarding the social group and the social movements with which our lives are wrapped up. That is not always best learned in the strenuous mood. It is worth while to relax sometimes, as the phrase "be still" actually means. In that quieter mood we get our reassurance of the power of God and the religious life.

Ninth Week, Second Day

What is the cause of personal atheism as you know men who profess it? Sometimes, doubtless, it is intellectual. Is it not sometimes purely moral? Have you not seen young fellows give up their idea of God, nominally because of some intellectual difficulty, but actually because of the letting down of their personal standards?

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.
They are corrupt, they have done abominable works;
There is none that doeth good.
Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there were any that did understand,
That did seek after God.
They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy;
There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge,
Who eat up my people as they eat bread,
And call not upon Jehovah?
There were they in great fear;
For God is in the generation of the righteous.
—Psalm 14: 1-5.

Whether this psalm means that the fool who declares there is no God does so because he is corrupt and does abominable works, or that he becomes corrupt because he has let the thought of God get away from him does not matter. The two things might go together. There is something to be said for the police power of religion for the average man. The idea of God has a clear moral force. A serious, thoroughgoing wish to know God prevents certain other wanderings of spirit which are ruinous. *Did you ever find yourself going wrong at any point without having to change your idea of God or to abandon it before you could have peace?*

Religion would have, on these terms, large social force. The psalm goes on to suggest that the moral breakdown which comes with denial of God works out into social wrongs. Exploiting other people will always be easier if we forget that we and they are children of one Father. Is Bernard Shaw right in saying: "If you let a child starve, you are letting God starve?" Certainly, injustice cannot go unpunished in a social order in which God is remembered. How is your own idea of God affecting your social life?

Ninth Week, Third Day

Arise, O Jehovah; O God, lift up thy hand:
Forget not the poor.
Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God,
And say in his heart, Thou wilt not require it?
Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite,
to requite it with thy hand:
The helpless committeth himself unto thee;
Thou hast been the helper of the fatherless. . . .
Jehovah, thou hast heard the desire of the meek:
Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear;
To judge the fatherless and the oppressed,
That man who is of the earth may be terrible no more.
—Psalm 10: 12-14, 17, 18.

If this kind of saying is valid, then social wrongs are irreligious, whoever commits them, and in an order where God has the final word they are doomed and people who continue them are doomed also. That has been true since the beginning, but it has sometimes been obscured by the accent on personal relations with God. We have forgotten that other men are so truly our brothers that offense against them is offense against a family order of which the Head of the family must take notice. The reason we are concerned with social wrongs, oppression of the poor, unfair distribution of the profits of toil, burdening of the helpless, is that all these things are at root irreligious. Lord Morley said that "morality is not *in* the nature of things, it *is* the nature of things." That is even more profoundly true of right religion. What it calls for is not something arbitrary, set up by a body of religious people, but obedience to the nature of human society, conceived as the family of God. That is what it means in the Lord's Prayer to hinge our being forgiven by God on our own forgiveness of other people. We are all bound in one bundle of life—God, our fellows and ourselves. He is noticing our social relations. Think over the parable of Jesus (Matt. 18:21-35) about the two debtors, one of whom owed his master a vast debt which was graciously forgiven, but who would not forgive a fellow servant a small debt owed to himself. *Relation to God, which is religion, has no meaning unless it affects relation to our fellowmen.*

Ninth Week, Fourth Day

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place
In all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. . . .
Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory upon their children.
And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us;
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.
—Psalm 90: 1, 2, 16, 17.

Here is a word for those of us who are honestly trying to get things done in the social order. We know that the best

things we undertake cannot be finished in our own generation without a speeding up of movements which is not common. We are compelled at our best to take account of the sweep of the generations. Somehow we are fitting into a movement greater than any single generation. When they asked Abraham Lincoln if he felt sure God was on his side, he answered that he was more concerned to be sure he was on God's side. *We have made a great step when we have become sure that God has a side of things in this world, and that the good causes are at home in him.*

What we do in the social order gets its permanence from the fact that God is in the work. It is this that makes it possible to endure the deep sorrow of seeing some of our best efforts come to nothing. A social worker in New York said a while ago that he had ceased to mourn over the failure of his enterprises, because he had found that the ones that failed were really in the way of better ones that could not be seen until these were out of the way. At the end of the great resurrection chapter (I Cor. 15:58) in which Paul has argued for a present, living Christ and not merely an historical Christ, he swings the whole argument back of an appeal for vigorous service in the work of the Lord, "forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." There may be ways in which work seems in vain, but it may safely be trusted to God to be established. Are you willing to do your full part today in confidence that God will make it worth while?

Ninth Week, Fifth Day

Most of us have a period in life, which some men never outgrow, when we are afraid of the idea of God and when we wish we could escape the demands of religion. That is what men mean when they say that they had so much religion when they were children that they have no taste for it now. Religion was irksome to them and they welcomed the chance to get away from it. That is not much to be wondered at, for it applies to many other things. There are plenty of men to whom school is so irksome that they want to escape it as soon as they can. Others feel the same way about home or work. All these things are merely grim necessities to them, to be abandoned as soon as possible. Here, instead, is

the true idea of religion both in personal and social life. It is a joyous thing.

Oh come, let us sing unto Jehovah;
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving;
Let us make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
For Jehovah is a great God,
And a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, and he made it;
And his hands formed the dry land.
Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker:
For he is our God,
And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
To-day, oh that ye would hear his voice!
—Psalm 95: 1-7.

There is no better news possible than that there is a God like the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and that he reigns over the earth. As this psalm suggests, it makes nature look different to feel that it is made by God and kept by him; it changes the meaning of history to know that he has a plan working through it; it transforms personal life to realize that he cares how life is lived and what comes of it. How do you feel about religion and its demands yourself? Have you come to the point of chafing under its negations? Is it chiefly a restriction or has it come to be an inspiration? Are you tamely or deeply glad to be a religious believer?

Ninth Week, Sixth Day

O give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness endureth for ever.
Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so,
Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the adversary,
And gathered out of the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.
They wandered in the wilderness in a desert way;
They found no city of habitation.

Hungry and thirsty,
Their soul fainted in them.
Then they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble,
And he delivered them out of their distresses,
He led them also by a straight way,
That they might go to a city of habitation.
—Psalm 107: 1-7.

The best argument for religion is its history. It has stood by men in strain and made them able to endure. It has made them face hunger and thirst without crying to anybody but God. It has not left them weaklings and incapables. That needs to be remembered when charges are made of the evil done in the name of religion. There are plenty of such things. Religion has always been a convenient cloak for evil. That proves nothing. The fact that cheap plaster walls fall down, though they are stained to look like marble, is really no argument against marble. The Scripture is a good book even though "old odd ends" can be stolen out of it to clothe the wicked villainy of Gloster, as Shakespeare makes him say he has done in Richard III (1:3). Whatever men have said about it, the religion that is true to God as Christ taught him does not provoke to violence and malice. It sustains us in the strain of living as it has sustained men in the past. It does not keep men from strain nor from hunger or thirst. These things come in as part of the day's work. Distresses and wandering are not evidences of desertion by God. He has not forsaken the social group when it finds its relation to the whole order difficult. But he does still make such faithfulness worth while by making men feel an inner satisfaction even in the midst of their needs. There is too much history for that to let it be doubtful.

Ninth Week, Seventh Day

Jehovah reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him:
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. . . .
Jehovah reigneth; let the peoples tremble:
He sitteth above the cherubim; let the earth be moved.

Jehovah is great in Zion;
And he is high above all the peoples.
Let them praise thy great and terrible name:
Holy is he.
—Psalm 97: 1, 2; 99: 1-3.

This reading contains the famous quotation of James A. Garfield when the assassination of Lincoln was announced. He was in New York and addressed a mass meeting in Wall Street, deeply stirred by the news. At the opening of his address he said: "Clouds and darkness are round about Him; God reigns and the government at Washington still lives!" The case for God in history is not yet closed, and there are more chapters to be written, but the evidence is already enough to make us sure of his presence and power. *All movements for righteousness and justice are part of the unveiling of his throne, for they are its foundation.* When we are troubled by the slow movement of such forces, we need to remember that growth of moral character and habit is involved in them. Would it be better to have a mechanically just world, in which social relations were determined without the will of the people who make up the social order? Is it not better for us to have to find out the demands of righteousness and justice than to have them made so clear to us that there are no clouds or darkness? Is Goethe right in saying in the prologue to Faust, "Man still must err while he doth strive"? Think out the value in your own case of the moral venture of life. Sometimes we wish that questions of duty or of human relationship could be answered so plainly that we would have no doubts about them and could always know just what we ought to do. Would that really be best for us? Little children must have conduct determined for them in that way; what would be the effect on them if it were so determined all through life? God does rule, whether we rejoice or tremble over the fact. Is it not well for us that sometimes his way is surrounded with clouds and darkness?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

The Hebrews were not inclined to speculation. No such philosophy as that of the Greeks nor even the coarser philosophy of the Romans appears in the Old Testament. But

no people were more assured about some great unseen realities than were they. God is one of those facts in all their literature. As Professor McFadyen says ("Messages of the Psalmists," p. 5): "The refuge of these men was in God; and more persistently than any other book in the Bible does the Psalms bring home to us the overwhelming sense of the reality and personality of God." Saying that there is no God was simply to set one's self down as a fool (14:1; 53:1)—not always in our bad, vicious sense of the word, but as a witless, thoughtless, unpenetrating man. Ernest Poole in "The Harbor" makes one of his characters tell of his college days that when the president was asked if they had any free-thinkers there, he replied, "No, we have not yet advanced that far. For it takes half as much thinking to be a free-thinker as to be a believer in God!" Walter Scott wrote in 1825: "There are few, I trust, who disbelieve the existence of God; nay, I doubt if at all times and in all moods any single individual ever adopted that hideous creed." And Churton Collins speaks of Shakespeare's "sense of the utter contemptibleness and unintelligibleness of man and life without reference to the divine."

Denial of God was explained for the psalmists by the bad character of the men who made it. They were corrupt (14:2, 3), they did foolishly—of course they did, the writer thought; for they had lost their moral balance when they lost their God, so fully did the idea of God enter into daily living. Some of our friends are insisting that morality and religion have no necessary connection. "If there be no God in the heavens, conscience is still in the earth." Duty, ethical culture, and many virtues are still possible. But we have not yet found a way to make them effective in daily life in the long run of things without finding a higher sanction than human opinion. The logic of the case, apart from God, is still with the man who says: "You think your way, and I think my way; why should you call me wrong?"

This relation to God was much thought of in social terms. It was personal, of course, but even then it involved one's being helped in social distresses (3:1; 57:4) and it demanded one's service of others (51:12, 13; 22:22, 30, 31). Glance through the 119th psalm and see how strongly personal it is and yet how constantly the social relations are emphasized. The writer knows he holds relation to God and his laws first

of all, but he sees also how much those laws require of him and how much they reward him in the social group and the social order of which he is part. So these writers are ready to draw universal principles from their personal experience. It is not just themselves who can find help in God, but "Jehovah upholdeth *all* that fall" (145:14), and blesses *all* those that take refuge in Him (2:12). God's relation to humanity is open to all who will claim it, and therein lies a tremendous social leverage.

We all tend to become like our real idea of God. Idols have this curse on them, that those who make them tend to become like them (135:18). If it is true that we tend to make a God in our image, as some of the books say, it is more markedly true that the God we have tends to make us over into his own image. That is the great fact underlying the assurance that the consummation of the Christian life is coming into likeness to Christ (I John 3:2). So long as this is possible, religion cannot be a matter of social indifference. *It must make a difference what kind of men go to make up the social order. It must make even more difference what kind of principles of life they adopt and what laws they have in their social relationships. But all these are part of the concern of religion.*

I

1. Religion in the social order is often *a disturbing power.* Under some conditions the thought of a reigning God will make men tremble (99:1). If a man wants to go wrong and at the same time wants to be at peace, he must get rid of his idea of God. Otherwise it will haunt him. There is nowhere he can go and be rid of it (139:7). Nevinson tells of finding an excitable Frenchman at an African port who professed himself delighted with the place because there were no ten commandments and no God there. That left him free to do as he pleased when he did not please nobly. In a stirring account of the way of an evil man in the 10th psalm it is said that he can keep on as he does because "all his thoughts are, There is no God." Otherwise, he could not do it. One of our American statesmen said, "As I think of slavery, I tremble for my nation when I remember that God is just." But how would he feel if he thought that God

is not just? God's justice is exactly the ground of hope for the correction of social wrongs. They cannot be permanent in an order where God has the final word.

Men who believe in God ought not to wonder at social disturbances. Some religions may stupefy men and call them to accept present evils in hope of future rewards. There have even been times when the Christian faith has been misunderstood in that way. Indeed, the great practical problem in the social field is to know how to use religion to make a condition endurable without cutting the nerve of the effort to correct the condition itself. It is the manifest purpose of religion to make us brave to bear whatever we must bear that comes to us in the order of our living (23:4). Equally it must be the purpose of religion to make us unwilling to rest in evil conditions, but to strain every nerve to undo the evil to which we have to submit (118:11-13). "A be-content-with-your-lot religion and a beyond-the-stars heaven can no longer be used as a soothing-syrup to silence the cries of the oppressed," Dr. Vedder says with a familiar exaggeration. *How to obey the mandates of lawful authority and yet to be strong to overthrow that authority because it is not right, however lawful, is the great political problem. How to use our faith to make us brave in bearing social injustice and brave also to challenge that injustice is our social problem.* But we can never hold a faith like ours, which lays its chief stress on character, and whose God is first of all holy (111:9) without being disturbed in the presence of social evils. We will have to be blind to them or dull to our faith to get along happily in their presence. We may not care to use the imprecatory psalms and call on God for the kind of vengeance they suggest, but we will not suppose that the wrongs with which they deal can go on without moral ruin.

II

Religion in the social order is intended to be *a rectifying power.* The inequalities of social conditions have always troubled thoughtful men. A deeply religious man cannot disregard them, and he is sure God does not disregard them, but is heeding them and will act with reference to them. If necessary, He will humble himself to see the things of earth

(113:6) and will care for the poor and needy (113:7, 8; 107:41). If wicked men think they can oppress with impunity, that only shows how foolish men can be. The 37th and 73rd psalms are devoted to the correction of any spirit that would misread the story of the supposed prosperity of evil in God's world. It is mushroom prosperity. We would have it corrected on the instant, but that cannot be the way of a world in which moral character is to be developed. Only, we are never to have the notion that immorality can go on uncorrected. The 7th and 10th psalms are based on some experience of the smash that has come to men who seemed too secure to be disturbed. They carry the same lesson as Browning's "Instans Tyrannus," a short poem in which he has told the scheming of an importunate tyrant to destroy a man who was not to his mind. The man himself was too insignificant to deserve such animosity, but the whim of the tyrant made him greater than he was. He was friendless, without place or position. At last the tyrant ran fires around him, laid mines under him and sent out his thunders over him, looking on "to enjoy the event."

> "When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
> Did I say 'without friend'?
> Say rather, from marge to blue marge
> The whole sky grew his targe
> With the sun's self for visible boss,
> While an Arm ran across
> Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
> Where the wretch was safe prest!
> Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
> The man sprang to his feet,
> Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
> —So, *I* was afraid!"

Is not that only a comment on Psalm 14:5, "There were they in great fear; for God is in the generation of the righteous"?

The favor claimed from God in the psalms is not arbitrary and on grounds of favoritism, but on the ground of righteousness. When men are condemned they are bad men, not personal enemies. They have oppressed the poor, they have ground down the distressed, they have robbed widows and orphans, they have sneered at the efforts of men to regain their feet after a fall, they have ridiculed religion and men

who have tried to be true to it, they have returned evil for good. In a word they are social offenders, and it does not occur to these writers that God can disregard that. On the other hand, the men approved are not favorites of fortune, but men who have tried to be true to God and man. In a word, they are social servants, and it does not occur to these writers that God can be indifferent to them and their fortunes. If religion is not to rectify such evils, if God is not to be supposed to care about them, then we will have to have a different idea of religion from that of the psalmists. It is for this reason that the lovingkindness of God is the peril of evil doers and the hope of the righteous (52).

III

Religion in the social order is intended to be a *reassuring power.* It is God who makes effort worth while. Unless he builds the house, they labor in vain that build it, and unless he keeps the city, the watchman wakes in vain (127:1). Admiral "Jack" Philip was not only a participant in our civil war and more prominently in the Spanish-American war in command of the Texas, but he was a sincere Christian. His Bible showed dates of his reading the entire Bible through twelve times and the New Testament thirty-four times. In his working copy of the Bible were these words written: "Send me anywhere—only go with me. Put any burden on me—only sustain me. Sever any tie, except that which binds me to Thy heart and service."

One Sunday Mrs. Julia Ward Howe had an experience which she records in her diary: "As we drove into town (to church) I had one of those momentary glimpses which in things spiritual are so precious. The idea became clear and present to my mind that God, an actual presence, takes note of our actions and intentions. I thought how helpful it would be to pass our lives in a sense of this divine supervision. The thought is one to which I have need to cling. I have at this moment mental troubles, obsessions of imagination, from which I pray to be delivered. While this idea of the divine presence was clear to me, I felt myself lifted above these things. May this lifting continue!" Tennyson's son tells that a week before the poet's death he "was

sitting with him and he talked long of the personality and the love of God—'that God whose eye considers the poor, who catereth even to the sparrow.' He said, 'I should infinitely rather feel myself the most miserable wretch on the face of the earth, with a God above, than the highest type of man standing alone.'"

There is no calculating the value in social movements of a sense of divine interest in the movement itself. Paul was ready for the hardest field, because after all it was neither his planting nor Apollos' watering, but God who gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:6, 7). When a scoffer asked Morrison if he thought he could make any impression on China, he replied, "No, but I think God can." Schemes have their value, but power belongs to God (62:11). He is the dwelling place of men who are trying to serve him (90:1); a refuge and strength for them (46:1), even though the last earthly friend should forsake them (27:10); not merely a place where they may feel safe, but a source whence they may feel strong. No man needs strength to keep him out of the fight, seeking refuge for himself. If there is any promise of strength it must be because men are to get into the thick of things; only, in the thick of things they are to be wholly unafraid (3:6; 56:3, 11; 112:7). Such a state will be brought about by keeping clear our sense of God as over against men. One of the writers prays that nations may know themselves to be but men (9:20) and another calls on God to act so that "man who is of the earth may be terrible no more" (10:18).

Dr. Weir Mitchell once sent a nervous New York business man out to the plains just east of the Rocky Mountains to regain his perspective. He needed to get his horizon pushed farther back where it belonged, to see himself as no bigger than he actually was, to know how much of the world there is outside of a business house. After six months there he came back cured, steadied for work again. Religion is meant to do that kind of thing for us. Apply it to your own case. What is the effect of your own religion on your judgment of events and characters on your college campus or in your community life? Does it tend to make you ready to take part in movements for good because you know they will not fail? Do you incline to magnify small things beyond their real importance?

IV

Religion in the social order is intended to be *an enlarging power*. That is the meaning of that strange combination of ideas in the 18th psalm: "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (v. 35). Our story of the argument between the wind and the sun as to their power over the traveler carries the same truth. Juvenal said that the adage, "Know thyself," came down from heaven. Coleridge advises us rather to ignore ourselves and strive to know our God.

But it is not necessary to call ourselves sisters of the worm in order to realize that it is more important for us to know God than anything else. Dr. Deems used to put the three sayings together: Know thyself; The proper study of mankind is man; Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace; and to say that each of them has its value but that they rise in importance in this order. Jesus said it in the highest hour of his life (John 17:3): "and this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus, in his sermon on this text, compares the growth of a plant and its reaching up toward the sun, finding its life there, with the growth of our souls as they reach up to God. Christ is the sun-ray that comes down to the soul, bearing the very nature of God and making him knowable to finite men. Certainly no religion in history has attempted to mean so much in the social order as the religion of Christ.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

In your observation of men who deny the existence of God or who count the matter wholly indifferent, are the reasons intellectual ones? What seems to you the probable explanation for such a position? What is the best way of meeting men of the sort?

Consider the attitude of the state toward religion. Is it well to consider the religious affiliations of a candidate for political office? Are laws relating to religion wise? How far ought laws regarding the Sabbath to go?

Religion being necessary for the social order, what should be the attitude of city or community settlements toward it? In cases where settlement leaders think religious influences cannot properly be used, how might their lack be made good?

CHAPTER X

Sin and the Social Order

DAILY READINGS

Tenth Week, First Day

There is a vigorous sense of sin revealed in the psalms. Some of it is, of course, purely personal. The man cannot think of the wrongs of other people when his own seem so dark. But most of the sin dealt with in the psalms is social. It breaks the relations among men and damages not only the man who commits it, but other people who are caught in his group or even the whole social order. This section for today covers a wide circle of thought about the social aspects of sin.

But unto the wicked God saith,
What hast thou to do to declare my statutes,
And that thou hast taken my covenant in thy mouth?
Seeing that thou hatest instruction,
And castest my words behind thee.
When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with him,
And hast been partaker with adulterers.
Thou givest thy mouth to evil,
And thy tongue frameth deceit.
Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother;
Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
These things hast thou done, and I kept silence;
Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself:
But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

—Psalm 50: 16-21.

One primary sin is hypocrisy, talking in the terms of religion but refusing to live by its laws. That dulls one's keenness of

understanding, so that one does not want to know duty. *There is no sin in not knowing social duty, but there is deep sin in refusing to try to find it out.* Suppose we say we do not see what we can do to hinder evils in the social order; may that not be an added charge against us? Ought we not to see? And is there not much danger that we will take part in the sins of other people, consenting with offenders, until we become parties to the offense ourselves? No man can be negative in his attitude toward sin without becoming positive in its favor. He fights it or favors it. Playing second fiddle to other men's sin is one road to committing sin ourselves.

Tenth Week, Second Day

So they did eat, and were well filled;
And he gave them their own desire.
They were not estranged from that which they desired,
Their food was yet in their mouths,
When the anger of God went up against them,
And slew of the fattest of them,
And smote down the young men of Israel.
For all this they sinned still,
And believed not in his wondrous works.
Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,
And their years in terror.
When he slew them, then they inquired after him;
And they returned and sought God earnestly.
And they remembered that God was their rock,
And the Most High God their redeemer.

—Psalm 78: 29-35.

Here is one of the perennial social complications; the relation between prosperity and evil. Professor Giddings' saying is familiar: "Sin is misery; misery is poverty; the antidote for poverty is income." Do you think that is fundamentally true? Can we think that if we are prospering, if our income is good, we have avoided sin? Would a prosperous nation be a sinless one? Would it even be a happy one on that account? There is no sin in prosperity, and if our income is good we may well be glad of it. But we must look elsewhere for evidence of freedom from sin. Moral and temporal conditions do not always run parallel. Nor does severe discipline or the withdrawal of prosperity neces-

sarily turn men from wrong-doing. It may be meant for that, and the first question a thoughtful man must ask when he is suffering failure is whether he is being corrected for the way he has been living. But he may not be. The thing we have to face is: Can our souls endure prosperity and keep right with God? And next after that: Can we learn the lessons of adversity if it comes to us? But while we are zealous to see great prosperity come to the social group which we love, the college or the community, we are to keep it fit for prosperity and brave enough for adversity.

Tenth Week, Third Day

But they flattered him with their mouth,
And lied unto him with their tongue.
For their heart was not right with him,
Neither were they faithful in his covenant.
But he, being merciful, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not:
Yea, many a time turned he his anger away,
And did not stir up all his wrath.
And he remembered that they were but flesh,
A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
How oft did they rebel against him in the wilderness,
And grieve him in the desert!
And they turned again and tempted God,
And provoked the Holy One of Israel.

—Psalm 78: 36-41.

Here again is the hollow note in religion which so soon turns to a positive note of wrong. Talking favorably about religion and God, and all the while merely flattering God, lying with the tongue while the heart is not right, is sure to lead to unfaithfulness in duty. God's covenant is a constant challenge of service, but it appeals to hearts and not chiefly to tongues. The trouble with the social order is the bad hearts which appear so commonly in it—our own bad hearts, whether they are born in us (51: 5) or not. Imagine that people everywhere, yourself included, were thoroughly sound in heart; how soon could the social problems be solved and the social evils righted? Not instantly, of course; but would we not be on the way toward the solution of all our present problems and well safeguarded against new ones? Yet it would be foolish to despair of the social order on this

account. God does not. He deals with us for what we are in order to make us what we ought to be. We never aggravate God into petulancy. The social order would have fallen to pieces many times if there had not been so many corrective forces at work. God's mercy appears in them. We are learning to think of human frailty more gently, somewhat as God does, knowing that men are but flesh after all. But that does not take away from them the fact of evil with its spoiling of the social order.

Tenth Week, Fourth Day

God's law is human duty and it is failure in duty or violation of that law that makes sin. *As you understand sin, could it not be described as self-assertion in disregard of God?* It is acting as though the law of God did not matter to us. Our sight of the will of God really measures our sense of sin. Paul speaks of that several times in the Romans (3:20; 4:15; 7:7). He says it is only when the law of God comes that we have any sense of sin. If we take light views of what God requires, is it not plain that we change our idea of human conduct? *We must lower our ideal or raise our conduct to have peace of mind when they differ.* But we are not to think of God's law as a limiting fact. It is the enlarging fact of the social order. God's ambitions for society are higher than our own.

The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever:
The ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
In keeping them there is great reward.

—Psalm 19: 7-11.

This tells what God's will would accomplish for us if we

gave it a chance. Sin is refusing to give it its chance to do what he wishes to do for us.

Tenth Week, Fifth Day

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Jehovah.
Lord, hear my voice:
Let thine ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.
If thou, Jehovah, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee,
That thou mayest be feared.
I wait for Jehovah, my soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
My soul waiteth for the Lord
More than watchmen wait for the morning;
Yea, more than watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, hope in Jehovah;
For with Jehovah there is lovingkindness,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
And he will redeem Israel
From all his iniquities. —Psalm 130.

The arresting thing here is the writer's sense of the prevalence of sin all about him. If there is no way of standing before God without sin, then no man can stand there. At some point we are all self-assertive in disregard of God, and that makes us hurtful to the social order for which his will is the only safe law. And God's way of forgiveness is not to disregard sin and not to make us think lightly of it, nor to make us trifle with it. There is forgiveness with him that he may be—*feared*. Sometimes we talk about forgiveness in terms that make us disregard God. When Heine was asked if he expected God to forgive him, he answered, "Of course; that is what God is for!" Is that the attitude toward God that understands his forgiveness? If our being forgiven does not make us feel more reverent and humble before God, then it may be wondered whether we have found forgiveness. And we are not to think of forgiveness as relieving us from the penalties of wrong doing. God redeems from iniquities, not from penalties. Of course when the iniquity itself is gone, the penalties go with it. It is not going to hell that is to be feared; it is belonging there because we have bound

our lives to the moral qualities that belong there that is to be feared.

Tenth Week, Sixth Day

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness,
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence;
And take not thy holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
And uphold me with a willing spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
—Psalm 51:7-13.

The correction of social evil begins with the individual life. A cleansed life is the first necessity. Purify *me*—wash *me*—blot out *mine* iniquities; and then will I teach transgressors Thy way. Jesus said the same thing in his parable about the mote in the eye of the neighbor and the beam in one's own eye. He did not suggest that we could be indifferent to either mote or beam, or that we might decline to help our neighbor with his mote because we have a beam in our own eye. He tells us to get rid of our own trouble and then we can see clearly to help somebody else. That is the weakness of refusal to take part in movements for the correction of a wrong condition in which one is personally involved. A college student cannot fairly decline to stand against wrongs on the campus because his own life has not been right. It is his business to make his life right in order that he may help in the work of correction. Dr. Arnold put a younger boy under the care of Tom Brown and that made Tom Brown brace up his own life. No wrongs are ever righted until somebody cares about them. There are no perfect men to care. It must be men who know their own need in some line who will ever get wrongs righted. The root evil in the social order is selfishness, and it is one form of selfishness when we will not correct our own lives so that

we may be effective in trying to correct wider wrongs in the social order.

Tenth Week, Seventh Day

Jehovah is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness.
He will not always chide;
Neither will he keep his anger for ever.
He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
Like as a father pitieth his children,
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.
For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.

—Psalm 103: 8-14.

Here again is the assurance that God understands our fight as well as our failure. People around us have clear eyes for the times we fall down, but they cannot know very fully the times we stood up instead of falling. They have a limit to what they will put up with, and they are not ready to make allowances. Indeed, we ought not to ask allowances from men because they have the same fight we have, for aught we know. We must not do any baby-acting when things go wrong with us. If we have any pleading to do, let it be done where it is asked, that is, with God. But in our own dealing with other people, offenders in the social order, we have to learn God's attitude. Severity in dealing with evils must always be safeguarded in spirit. Vengeance, or trying to get even with wrongdoers, is not like God. A judge, sentencing a seventeen-year-old offender, a murderer whose nonchalance had been very trying, added to his committal to the penitentiary for life the words, "And I hope you will rot there." Meanwhile the boy became quite a hero with women who sent him flowers and notes. Plainly, there is a middle course of strength and gentleness which we must learn to take. God's severity is for saving. Ours must be. The new science of penology may swing too far, but it is more nearly Christian than much of the old system.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

I

Sin is an act of the human will, self-assertion in disregard of God. It may be defiant, committed in full view of duty, or merely indifferent to any will of God. Most sin is of the latter sort, and comes out of an inherent self-regard which has value when it is rightly directed. Illustrate it with what you know of ambition, which is one form of self-regard: could a man do his best work without ambition; on the other hand, is there anything that cripples a man's power to help society more than ambition that is selfish? It is when the self is asserted in disregard of God and his requirements on self that sin is sure to appear. And as the self is set in the order of God in a social group and then in a wider social order, it follows naturally that most sin is social, either in its provocation or in its continuance or in its worst results. The writers of the psalms treat it so.

The best writers in literature treat it in the same way. Compare Tennyson's use of the Knights of the Round Table with Malory's use of the same story. In both cases, the Round Table is broken up by sin, the sin of individuals at first, broadening into the group. Malory makes it the sin of Arthur himself, and the breakup of the order an act of fair reprisal for his wrong. Tennyson makes it the result of the sin of Guinevere and Lancelot which could not continue theirs alone, but in the nature of the case spread to the group. In either case, selfishness is the root form of the sin, the war of Sense against the Soul, as Tennyson calls it in the closing part of the Idylls. But selfishness is never possible without damage to the social group, for in its very meaning it involves that group. When a man tells a lie he not only becomes a liar, but he vitiates the social atmosphere in which he has to live and makes it harder for himself and for others to be true.

There is obvious danger in taking all responsibility from the individual and blaming everything on society. Society itself is made up of individuals and if the individual offender is not to blame for his part in the wrong he has done, it seems idle to blame other individuals for the part they have had in the same wrong. If a poor man cannot help stealing, then how can a rich man help oppressing him? Are not both

under the same social pressure? The plea which transfers the load of blame from the offender to the social order proves too much. The fact is that both the individual who is "forced" to do wrong and the individuals who "force" him to do it can keep from doing the wrong thing, while each is making it harder for the other to do the right thing. The slums do not explain all the badness; it takes some measure of the badness to explain the slums. Poverty makes some men shiftless and shiftlessness makes some men poor. Need for food drives some men to dishonesty and dishonesty drives some men to hunger. If a young fellow goes wrong on a college campus, that is partly because there are wrong social conditions which he meets there and partly because he gives way to them unnecessarily. So the psalms emphasize personal responsibility for wrong, and yet almost without exception use the plural for offenders. We sin individually, but we live in droves and the drove helps us to sin and carries the large result of the sin. Read here, if possible, Lowell's "Parable" in which he tells of Christ's coming to earth again to see how his brethren believed in him. He found churches everywhere, but need abounded as well.

"Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

"These set He in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garments' hem,
For fear of defilement, 'Lo, here!' said He,
'The images ye have made of me!'"

How far was it fair for Lowell to place the blame of these "images" on the whole social order or on all brethren of Christ?

We noted in one of our daily studies four social sins which are grouped in one psalm (50:10-21): hypocrisy, partnership with evil, sins of the tongue, and contempt for God. Frequently throughout the psalms oppression of weaker people is dealt with (10:7-10; 55:9-11; 140:1-5). Not even the minor prophets are more earnest in their protest against oppression of the poor than these psalmists. The conditions are almost modern, though the machinery for refined

oppression is more efficient today than it was then. We are all more or less caught in that machinery and are unwitting or helpless partners in wrong which we do not wish to perform.

A recent writer has suggested that we take a Sabbath morning off and put down in a row the things that are the matter with us morally. We will find, he thinks, that sins will practically divide off into two lists. In one list will be original sins, those which are just our own, which we know all about and which we can "turn on and off personally or by hand." In the other list will be the sins that come from "what might be called our sin factory," the evils which we allow to be forced on us by the conditions under which we live. We do not believe, let us say, in cutthroat competition, but our competitors do; what can we do about it? We do not believe in Sunday study, but our fellow contestants for a prize do; what can we do about it? As head of a corporation or of a college society, can a man act just as he would all by himself? In many ways these "machinery" sins are more dangerous than the personal ones, for they lead us to unload our responsibility on other people, specially on some vague, impersonal condition for which no one can be blamed. Over against that we need to set the solid assurance of personal responsibility for sin which runs all through the psalms.

The prevalence of sin in the social order is plain also. If God should mark iniquities, no one could stand before him (130:3), and in such eyes as his no man living is righteous (143:2). There are many degrees of wrong, and men may plead their own efforts to be right, but in every direction there are signs of men's disregard of God. That does not cast a shadow over human life, because God knows more about it than we do and is unfailingly merciful to men (103:10-12; 78:39). All our thought of sin needs to be kept out in the light of the love of God. It is persistent sin that makes that love a consuming fire.

II

The seriousness of sin in the social order will always be determined by the ideal of the social order by which we measure offenses against it. Whether or not a boy likes the spirit of the college in which he is studying depends on the

kind of spirit he likes in a college. If he feels that "boys will be boys" and therefore that stealing signs and sidewalks is justifiable college humor; if he feels that professors are the natural enemies of students, to be circumvented whenever possible, and that cheating in examination is the lookout of the professors; if he thinks that profanity and drinking are essential or incidental to growing manhood and the spirit of independence—then he may find the campus spirit satisfactory where men of other ideals might think it quite otherwise. Our moral judgments reveal our moral ideals.

Suppose we set out with the thought that prosperity is the sign of a right social order. Under it everybody is to have enough income so that he is not miserable and hence not sinful. Then our idea of what sin is will be very different from the one we will have if we take prosperity as a mere incident in a right social order, while we put moral relationships and right conduct foremost. The 10th psalm and the 78th tell what is the effect of getting the ideal of prosperity into the uppermost place in thought of the social order. It clouds the idea of any higher relationship with God. Eras of prosperity are not generally those of greatest consciousness of these higher relationships. They are not even the times of greatest social service; sense of fraternity with needy people does not quicken at such times. The fact is that adversity has often awakened a social group to the finer things which had been hid from them by their prosperity. College alumni rejoice in a great gift to a college, but they rally to it more when a call for help goes out to them. Success tends to loosen our higher bonds. It ought not to do so, and it need not do so. All we need now to realize is that no social theory which puts first the purely temporal prosperity will give us a good basis for judgment regarding social evils. The factory that brings prosperity may be also the most dangerous influence in the community or it may not be; the prosperity it brings is no final gauge.

At the very end of the long 104th psalm is a sudden turn which carries this same suggestion. The psalm is taken up with an account of the goodness of God in the world, his care of nature, his maintenance of its forces and all that. Just at the end, out of a clear sky, comes the 35th verse: "Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more!" It is so amazing that some scholars have sug-

gested that it may not belong there. That is purely a critical question and need not concern us, though all the external argument is in favor of its retention. But the internal argument seems good also. "In such a world as this, how utterly out of place sin is!" seems to be the thought. One can imagine worlds without the beauty and care of this one, where sin could be excused, but not in this one. A place can be imagined where an oath would be defended, but not in presence of one's mother, surely; how then in presence of one's God? A cesspool somewhere, perhaps, but not in the front lawn of the palace. Sin in a social order which is patterned on God's ideal is vastly more shameful than in an order without such a pattern. You can have garish color in a modernist painting, but you cannot have it in the Sistine Madonna nor in The Last Supper. One of the writers asked to be kept from "the dainties" of the wicked (141:4), lest his taste be perverted. Social ideals are greatly needed before we can pass fair judgment on the seriousness of sin or of any social wrong.

III

Sin in the social order must be gotten rid of somehow. Chief concern is not for its results, but for itself. These writers are not anxious about what may happen to them because of their sin; they want to be rid of the sin itself. There is no plea for relief from penalties while they keep the sins. They look for redemption from iniquities (130:8) and release from sin (51:2, 7). If those things are gone, penalties will take care of themselves, but there could be no greater calamity than to take away the penalties and leave the sins. Indeed, the fact that that seems sometimes to be done is one of the baffling experiences of these writers. The feeling is inevitable that in a right social order temporal success should go along with right conduct and adversity with wrong conduct. Ultimately, when the purposes of moral character are accomplished, that will doubtless be the case. Just now cases keep rising where it does not follow. They rose in the earlier days as well (94:3-7; 10:4-11) and were just as baffling. A prosperous scoundrel does more than any other single factor to loosen the bonds of morality in a community. A successful college contestant who is crooked is a

tremendous force in vitiating the atmosphere of a campus. We all like success and there are times when it seems worth getting at any cost. Our eyes get fixed on results and we think protests against methods pharisaical. We think that a man cannot be very bad or he would not get on so well, or else we think that it does not matter whether a man is bad or not if only he gets on well enough. That is the result of thinking more of penalties than of sins.

And yet there is something in every decent man that protests against that. "You cannot get golden conduct out of leaden motives." You cannot have a sound social order wherein wrong is done to other people even if some people do prosper by it. Sooner or later right will assert itself. As Charles A. Dinsmore puts it: "About the certainty of retribution there is perfect unanimity" (among writers of great literature). "Nemesis follows hard after every transgressor. The retribution of sin is sure, swift, terrible, casting far its poisoned net and entangling sinner and saint, the mature and the unborn, in its fearful toils. The interpreters of the spiritual world are one in their vision of the reality of the moral order and the certainty of its recoil whenever it is disturbed by sin." ("Atonement in Literature and Life," p. 157.) It has been said that the frontispiece of each of George Eliot's works might fittingly be a pair of scales and a sword. Dr. Dinsmore thinks it would serve for all the world's great masterpieces. "The sure movement of the scales and flash of the sword are seen in them all." William Dean Howells "received some of his most pronounced ideas of the average justice of the universe from Dickens and the way he disposes of his characters." Nothing else than ultimate punishment for sin was credible to men as sure of God as these psalmists were. Sometimes they spoke as though evil carried its own destruction with it (34:21; 140:11) and sometimes they looked to see God himself interpose (139:19), but they had no doubt of the ultimate outcome. The social order in God's world has no place in it for sin.

But, with all this, they believe confidently in forgiveness. They face, as we must, the problem of finding a way of forgiveness which will not encourage men in sin. There have been periods when God's forgiveness was taken for granted. Easy views of his goodness expect him to overlook sin. The social consciousness necessarily raises a question about

that. Can you have a social order that does not care about sin? Can you maintain righteousness if you let righteousness and unrighteousness run along on just the same plane, if honest men and thieves are treated just alike, if liars and truthtellers are undistinguished? And can a moral universe exist if moral distinctions do not run deep enough in it to count?

That is the problem we face in our new penal methods. Will they help to make men hate sin or will they loosen the bonds that hold men back from it? It is the glory of the Christian method of forgiveness that it does not make men think more lightly of sin nor encourage them to go on in it. Rather, it helps forgiven men to a wider sympathy than is revealed in the psalms, except occasionally (51:12-15). Men who know they have done wrong are not therefore estopped from entering into movements for good. That very chapter in their own lives may be used in God's goodness to make them mightier in service. In George Eliot's "Scenes of Clerical Life" is a story called "Janet's Repentance" in which Mr. Tryon, the trusted minister, tells Janet the story of his own early wrong-doing, not boastfully, but humbly, and points out to her so helpfully the way of release from her own sin that Mr. Moody asked the consent of the publishers to print it as a tract for use in his evangelistic meetings. Men maimed by evils in the social life can use their very injuries as arguments in their strife against them. One of the most effective workers for temperance has been Frederick W. Charrington, who renounced great brewery possessions in the East End of London and took the losses, that he might serve the opposite forces and so became "a great spiritual force of this era." On a stone in the old Tennant churchyard in New Jersey is the name of a young man of whom the inscription says that he gave up his worldly gains and prospects "to avoid sin." Such men are challenged by the chance to help in correcting sin in the social order, if they really hate it enough.

Boastful, holier-than-thou men will never supply the correction for social evils, but neither will men who compromise with or minimize such evils. We must have men who hate evil with a deep passion because they love men with an equal passion and cannot abide the things that ruin them. Near the close of "Romola," after Baldasarre grapples Tito and

drags him to his death, George Eliot writes: "Who shall put his finger on the work of justice and say, 'It is there'? Justice is like the kingdom of God—it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning." Men with the great yearning for a corrected social order have their chance today as never before.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Can sin be explained as mere defect or delayed development? If so, is a lie a defective truth or stealing delayed development toward honesty? Or, are the men who commit these deeds on the way to righteousness by reason of them?

Work out some of the problems arising from the great increase of modern corporate life. Are stockholders, bond owners, partners in large concerns, responsible for evils that may be there? In a time of economic distress the head of a large corporation laid off 500 men and on the same day subscribed $50,000 personally for relief of distress in the city. Can you justify his action in both points?

CHAPTER XI

The Spirit of Praise Within the Social Order

DAILY READINGS

Eleventh Week, First Day

It is a good thing to give thanks unto Jehovah,
And to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High;
To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,
And thy faithfulness every night,
With an instrument of ten strings, and with the psaltery;
With a solemn sound upon the harp.
For thou, Jehovah, hast made me glad through thy work:
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
How great are thy works, O Jehovah!
Thy thoughts are very deep.

—Psalm 92: 1-5.

You recognize this as the familiar *Bonum Est* of the church service and of many anthems. The title in our Bibles calls it a song for the Sabbath Day and it was appointed to be used always in the morning service of the temple on the seventh day of the week. That is characteristic of the Hebrew idea of worship. It should contain petition and confession of sin and humble recognition of the divine hand in history, but its dominating note should always be praise. And this psalm starts our thought of the element of praise in the social order just where it should be started. *Here is the unfailing ground of praise—God himself and his relation to the world.* Surface facts may change, and if our joy is tied to them it may fail as they do. The only note of gladness in the story of Jonah is in 4:6, where the account is given of the sudden growth of the vine that sheltered him

while he watched for the destruction of Nineveh: "So Jonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd." And when the gourd dried up, his gladness dried up with it. No wonder he was glad, but his gladness was not rooted deep enough to last. After the gourd had dried up, God remained, and if he had rooted his gladness in Him, he could have taken the gourd as an incident, rejoicing in it. It does not do to grow too dependent on surface facts in the social order, the success of this or that incidental movement of reform, or the advancement of this or that person, or the passing prosperity of a cause. We must get below these in order to be secure in our joy over them. Unless they are incidents of God's presence in the social order, they will not abide.

Eleventh Week, Second Day

Sing praises to God, sing praises:
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth:
Sing ye praises with understanding.
God reigneth over the nations:
God sitteth upon his holy throne.
The princes of the peoples are gathered together
To be the people of the God of Abraham;
For the shields of the earth belong unto God:
He is greatly exalted.

—Psalm 47: 6-9.

Praises with understanding—that is the point today. In one of Cowper's hymns he says that "blind unbelief is sure to err." There is blind belief also, which accepts unintelligently the profoundest truths. Have you ever met a scientific student in college who accepted without care whatever he thought was being taught in the classroom and noticed how he tended to misrepresent the teaching and to announce the most amazing "discoveries" of which no one else had ever heard? He was a blind believer. In the same way, there is such a thing as blind praising, our doxologies meaning nothing to us or aroused by wholly unworthy causes of praise. Mr. Chesterton says that while Buddhist or other "saints" may sit with their eyes closed in contemplation of themselves or of God, the Christian "saint" is always represented with eyes wide open, looking squarely at life at its worst and its

best and sure of God all the while. We can never hope to praise God worthily by closing our eyes to hard facts. It must be intelligent praise that honors him. The little extract for today gives three grounds for such praise: the universal reign of God, all nations being included; the holy throne on which he sits; the overruling possession of all the forces of the world—the shields of the earth belong to God. *There is no part of the social order from which God is excluded, his purposes for it are not temporal merely, but primarily moral, and all questions about progress are to be moral ones at the last; and all defences to be effective must have that same moral value which will make them worthy of their relation to him.*

Eleventh Week, Third Day

With this day we begin an ascent of praise, rising each day to the end of the week in thought of the grounds of praise. Each has large social value. Today we are called to *praise God because of nature.* He made the heavens and that sets him above all idols and gives him honor and majesty. In this sanctuary of the world which he has erected are strength and beauty.

Oh sing unto Jehovah a new song:
Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth.
Sing unto Jehovah, bless his name;
Show forth his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
His marvellous works among all the peoples.
For great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised:
He is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols;
But Jehovah made the heavens.
Honor and majesty are before him:
Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

—Psalm 96: 1-6.

In a sermon on this last line, which Dr. Mark Hopkins preached to the Williams students, he suggests how often we see strength in nature without beauty and beauty without strength, but that no complete view of the world can be taken without combining them. In the oak or the elm, he

says, we have both. Recall Jesus' frequent use of nature as argument for God. Can you place his use of these: the soil, the grain of wheat, the mustard seed, the fig tree and its barrenness, the wheat, the tares, the vine, the lilies, the sheep, the sparrows, the hen and chickens, the wind, the looks of the sky, pearls? Some one asked Henry Ward Beecher how he found his illustrations for sermons. He replied that they kept finding him, that no one could cross the ferry from Brooklyn to New York and look up at the sky without finding things to say about God. This has social value in the demand it makes on us to see that all men have a chance at nature with its lessons. The increase of park acreage in cities, the provision of fresh air trips for the poor and shut-in, the movement toward many small holdings of land instead of a few large ones, the effort to improve living conditions in the country—all these are wise. They help to keep the social forces on right terms with nature.

Eleventh Week, Fourth Day

Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands.
Serve Jehovah with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that Jehovah, he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
For Jehovah is good; his lovingkindness endureth for ever,
And his faithfulness unto all generations.

—Psalm 100.

It is this psalm, put into meter and beginning, "All people that on earth do dwell," that has given us our Old Hundredth music to which we sing ordinarily Bishop Ken's verse, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." We have it here complete and it ought to be committed to memory. It furnishes a second step of ascent in praise—*man and God's care for him*. The men who make up the social order are made and kept by God. They belong to him as a creature belongs to its creator, as a people belong to the ruler and

deliverer under whose care they exist, as a flock belongs to its shepherd under whose guidance it finds food and drink and shelter. There is nothing mechanical about it, nothing arbitrary. The relationship can be repudiated or refused, or else it can be recognized and rejoiced in. It is there, whatever we do about it. The whole social order and all the groups that make it up belong to God. Injury of any of its parts runs back to injury of his possessions. There will always be a false note in our praise while we omit other lands or other peoples or other groups of people in our own land. Whether the Hebrews saw such a wide sweep or not, is of no importance; certainly they found themselves saying it. Their phrases cover "all the lands" and "all generations." It is this latter assurance of the reliability of God for generations yet to come that makes us ready to attempt enterprises that cannot be completed in our own day. We are tenants, but we can plant orchards and forests for men who will come after we are gone. God's faithfulness will keep them for other generations.

Eleventh Week, Fifth Day

Praise ye Jehovah;
For it is good to sing praises unto our God;
For it is pleasant, and praise is comely.
Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem;
He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds. . . .
Jehovah upholdeth the meek:
He bringeth the wicked down to the ground. . . .
For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates;
He hath blessed thy children within thee. . . .
He hath not dealt so with any nation;
And as for his ordinances, they have not known them.
Praise ye Jehovah.

—Psalm 147:1-3, 6, 13, 20.

Many of the scholars think this psalm was written for use at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem when it was rebuilt after the exile by Nehemiah, when, we are told (Neh. 12:27), there was much singing and instrumental music. It would be fitting for such a time. With it we rise again in the grounds of praise in the social order—*the sympathy of*

God with human need. When a pastor told a troubled man that the fault with him was that he would not count God his friend, he replied, "No; I hope I am not so impertinent as that." It seemed to him too much to talk of God as a friend to an individual. Here is the assurance that God understands human need and is active regarding it. Suppose, therefore, we should find ourselves challenged by social need and face movements for its supply; we have the right to expect God's interest in them. He is on the side of every moral movement and with every redemptive force. There can be no need in the social order to which God is indifferent. It is his challenge to us who are in the order to give his power its chance in us to correct it. That is the way he makes a real order in the world, by using men who know him and care for their fellows.

Eleventh Week, Sixth Day

Praise ye Jehovah.
Sing unto Jehovah a new song,
And his praise in the assembly of the saints.
Let Israel rejoice in him that made him:
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
Let them praise his name in the dance:
Let them sing praises unto him with timbrel and harp.
For Jehovah taketh pleasure in his people:
He will beautify the meek with salvation.
Let the saints exult in glory:
Let them sing for joy upon their beds.

—Psalm 149: 1-5.

Here is a daring word, that God "takes pleasure in his people!" Yesterday we read that he upholds the meek; today we add that he beautifies them. Evidently a morose spirit or a gloomy heart cannot be suitable in a world where such things can be thought about God. And the higher ground for praise which we find here is *the presence in the world of a redeemed and redeeming group.* Whatever is happening to us personally, there is no missing the fact of that group in the social order. If we should need to say that the gospel of salvation is not working everywhere, we cannot fail to see that it is working somewhere. There are people in whom God takes pleasure. There are people whom

he is beautifying with salvation. When Mill said that it is well for men to remember that once a man of the name of Socrates walked the earth, Harnack added that it was even better for them to remember that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once walked the earth. We can go on to add that it is well to remember that even today there are thousands of people who walk the earth showing the power of God in their daily lives. That is what we can mean by the clause in the creed, "I believe in the communion of saints." We are not alone in the social order, and our judgment of it ought to include these groups of redeemed people who are giving themselves to the service of God and men. They are in cities and country, in hospitals and prisons, in home and foreign lands—just quiet people who are praising God in their lives. "They do God's will; to them all one if on the earth or in the sun."

Eleventh Week, Seventh Day

O praise Jehovah, all ye nations;
Laud him, all ye peoples.
For his lovingkindness is great toward us;
And the truth of Jehovah endureth for ever.
Praise ye Jehovah.

—Psalm 117.

This exquisite little psalm, the shortest in the collection, is another that ought to be committed to memory. Probably it was intended as a doxology for use at the end of other psalms. We have had premonitions of it in several readings of the week, but it brings us to the climax of our ascent of praise. We have thought of nature, of man and God's relation to him, of God's sympathy with human need, and of the presence in the world of a redeemed and redeeming group. Here we find the highest ground of praise, as on the first day of the week we found the surest ground, *in God himself and the two great traits of his character which are so often taught in the psalms, his lovingkindness and his truth.* Notice how universal the psalm is, how completely it surpasses every thought of narrowness. If there were Hebrews who felt other nations shut out from God's care or from obligation to him, they must have choked on this psalm. Even if we accent the pronoun "us," as some want us

to do, it still leaves the psalm universal, for it implies that the goodness of God to a group is intended to rejoice the hearts of the whole. But that accent is wholly unnecessary. The "us" is as wide as the nations and peoples. And the plan of God will not be complete till the praise is as universal as this call is. As to the social order, are there any two virtues which are more needed than the two here suggested? Which seems to mean more to you—lovingkindness (mercy) or truth? Of which is our social order in greater need? They are traits of God's dealing with men. They do not need to be introduced into the world; they are here. They need only to be applied, worked out by the people of God as God himself is working them into the social fabric. Without either of them the social order will fail. But it will not fail, for they are here, since God is here.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Praise is essentially a social fact. We may sing solos, but we sing them to a group and when once they are sung they become everybody's property. We are not trained to praise, but only in the method of praising. The fact rises out of something deep within us. In such a world as this it is only seemly that the voice of praise should be heard. Praise is comely for the upright (33:1). It is a good thing; an appropriate thing, to give thanks unto God and to praise his name (92:1; 147:1). One of the early writers said that praise is the rent we owe to God for his goodness to us. Robert Louis Stevenson suggests the prayer: "Lord, help us to repay in service one to another the debt of thine unbenefited merits and mercies." All the great religions and even their side-issues make provision for music in their services, and while most non-Christian religious music is minor, yet even so it provides for the expression of the spirit of thanksgiving.

I

The psalms are songs, expressing much individual desire, but gathering up that same desire for many others than the singer. Most of them are distinctly plural, intended for social use. The Hebrew name of the whole collection is *Sepher Tehillim*, Book of Songs of Praise. And though

only one psalm is definitely described in its title as a song of praise (145), yet the title is appropriate for the whole book, because "thanksgiving is the very life of the Psalms, even of those in which there breathes most the language of complaint." (Perowne, "The Psalms," vol. I, p. 57.) Our English word Hallelujah is taken over from the Hebrew and means, Praise ye Jehovah. It occurs over and over in these songs. Part of the word gives the title to two sections in the collection. Psalm 136 is known as the Great Hallel and is arranged for responsive use by the appearance in every stanza of the same response, "For His lovingkindness endureth forever!" Here plainly is provision for social praise. Can you not imagine that single refrain rising with increasing volume from a congregation of worshippers? But the better known "Egyptian Hallel" consists of Psalms 113-118; it was sung on festival occasions throughout the year and was the "hymn" sung by our Lord and the disciples as they went out from the upper room after the first observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:30). It tells the story of deliverance from Egypt and from other oppression and calls to praise for the lovingkindness of God. And this sort of thing was characteristic of the Hebrew faith. It had its fast days and seasons, but many more feast days and seasons. Indeed only one fast day was prescribed. Provision was made for one week of outdoor life when the people were to live in booths, free from the care of houses, just being glad, reminding themselves of the care-free life which their fathers had led in the wilderness under divine guidance, and rejoicing in the completion of the harvest. Many of the psalms were prepared for journeys and for particular events which recurred in the national life. It was a singing faith. The whole collection of its songs closes with a grand crash of praise, in which voices, instruments, nature, history, and the individual soul are called on to attempt justice to the spirit of praise (145-150).

This spirit is still in the Christian faith and the psalms have entered into Christian worship more than any other single book of the Bible. The 92nd psalm is sung by choirs and congregations as the *Bonum Est*; the 95th is the *Venite* of the church service; the 96th is the *Cantate Domino;* the 100th is the familiar *Jubilate;* and even the 67th, which is the *Deus Miseratur* of our Christian worship, turns into a hymn

of triumphant praise before it is closed. In all Christian ages there have been churches which have felt so strongly the value of these psalms that they have not permitted any other songs to be used in formal worship, and while the main body of believers has not been ready to agree to that limitation, it remains as a suggestive hint of the age-long worth of songs written before the coming of Christ. They have so much of the highest religious spirit that Christian believers can use them without a sense of lack of any note which their faith requires. And even without the limitation desired it is still true that these psalms make up a larger part of the worship of the Church than any other one element.

II

In the daily studies we have found part of the secret of this power of the psalms in praise—the broad and unchanging grounds which they suggest for it. They move on no superficial level, not proposing mere dead levels of praise. We need not go over the grounds again, but several will be well to review. Take the call to praise with reference to the setting of the social order, the world in which we must live as men. There is doubtless a point of view from which this world can be described as a "wilderness of woe," since it is not our permanent home, as heaven is to be. But it actually is our home for the present and our Father made it and keeps it (95:5; 104 throughout). The heavens are the work of his fingers, he ordained the moon and the stars (8:3). The earth is full of his lovingkindness (33:5). It belongs to him with all its fulness and with all that dwell in it (24:1). Any good commentary will show that the 29th psalm is a vivid account of a storm sweeping in from the sea; as it dies away and the sun comes out again, "in his temple everything saith, Glory!" Open the book of psalms to almost any page, and see if you do not find some work of nature given as a ground of praise to God. It is here we must live; it is under these conditions that any social order must be formed; it is by these forces that any social correction must be made.

In the fourth week we noticed that the world as it is constituted is fitted for the development of the human race in the highest virtues. It comes to mind again here. This ought

to give us a Christian point of view toward physical science. So far is it from any collision with the Christian faith that it ought to be counted its firmest ally. Whatever truth it may discover about the world and its forces will be only so much more light on the works of God's hands, in which even the Hebrew writer rejoiced (92:4, 5). *God has not hid his way in nature to keep us from finding it out, but to induce us to find it out. We cannot find out too much about the world if we count it our Father's world.* We are meant to think his thoughts after him, to consider his heavens, the moon and the stars, his wonders in the deep. Indeed, there is no physical science which could not find its warrant in the words of these psalms. The great discoveries of the past have sometimes been received with suspicion, lest they unsettle some elements of religious faith. Surely there is experience enough by this time to make every religious man wish well to every laboratory or scientific expedition in the world. Jesus Christ is the Truth, and to him all truths in all fields will draw as steel filings draw to a magnet. The social order needs all the discoveries that can be made in this world of God, and when it is declared that science is advancing the human race, let no religious man resent it; let him rather rejoice in it. At the root of it, the fact is religious. God has made the world and he keeps it. Man whom he loves will come to a sound social order by knowing his world all the better. All that we learn deepens our note of praise.

It will be well also to think again of the value in the world of the forces for good, the corrective agencies which appear in groups of redeemed and redeeming men. Once in a while the other forces get such prominence that they seem to take the field. It is only a seeming. Any list of the redemptive forces of a great city will reveal a vast amount of overlapping and unwisdom in method and organization. No doubt one of the longest steps toward the correction of social evils would be the destruction of many of the corrective agencies, as a social worker has said. But even so, the presence of such agencies always implies the existence of at least a small body of people who care enough to try to do something about the evils. Every man who in his own turn cares about those evils is partner with a multitude of others whose names he cannot know, but who are working in the same campaign in other parts of the field.

Dr. Robert Clements tells that in a Canadian village more men volunteered for the European campaign than could be taken, and the volunteers were compelled to draw slips of paper to determine who should go. The successful ones drew papers designated with a cross mark. One lad hurried home to his minister father rejoicing that he was to go, saying, "When my turn came, I just prayed that I would draw the cross." In a far deeper sense than the boy ever meant, the hope of the social order turns on a multitude of men who have done that very thing, who have not wanted the easy thing or the pleasant thing, but the thing that will help most, that will cost. The presence of so many such men is ground for praise and for unfailing assurance about the outcome of social movements.

In the long sweep of history these men find God on their side among them that help them (118:7). It is he who has taught their hands to war and their fingers to fight (144:1) and they realize him as the abiding fact in the progress of the generations (144:4). And he becomes at the last, both for himself and for the work which he does among men, the deepest ground for praise. It is a favorite expression of President McClure that he finds God beautiful, and when James Russell Lowell was facing the national needs, he said, "I take great comfort in God."

III

It is at this point of its joy that religion makes its first appeal to many in the social order. Can it brighten life? Does it reveal something to be glad of? Is it restrictive or inspiring? No one has put religion out of his life because it seemed to him too joyous. The multitudes who refuse to go to church services on the Sabbath are not complaining that these services encourage them too much in the life battle. Rather, they think they can find larger cheer and rest in other things. To a great many people, impossible as it may seem to us, Disraeli's expression in "Coningsby" is not too strong: "Youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle; old age a regret." Most of us count that blasphemy, but to these people it represents their experience. They are hot-foot in search for redeeming joys in life. They want the singing elements discovered.

Nor does Carlyle's grim counsel overcome that desire. He warns us that we are not in this world to be happy, but to do our duty. And that is true, but it does not mean that we are not to be happy. The contrast between the two facts of duty and happiness is not necessary. There is always something awry within us when religion is irksome and duty a bugbear. We can learn to delight to do the will of God (40:7, 8) and no one can read the 119th psalm with its many references to the law of God without realizing that to the writer it was an inspiration and not chiefly a restriction. It did not shut him in; it let him out. When we get a social order expressive of the will of God for men, it will not be one that chafes the free spirits of men, but a joyous one whose main note will be cheer. It is not the thought of the psalmists that strength enough barely to hold out may be available, but rather that men can feel their strength steadily renewed (103:5), can have a sense of perpetual youth.

So it becomes peculiarly the obligation of men who count religion a vital thing to be on the side of movements which aim to deepen the note of joy in the social order. It may be necessary to oppose plans for amusement, and it may be only sensible to resist schemes for what some men will call pleasure. They may be actually cutting the root of joy. Recreation is a possibility not yet worked out. Much that goes by that name is not re-creation at all, but is destructive of vital forces. It is possible for college athletics to pass the bounds of recreation and become only a kind of business. Great Sunday excursions, plans for excessive pleasures, maintenance of places of resort which are nominally for the happiness of people but which actually bring ruin to lives—these can be opposed in no kill-joy spirit.

Plenty of men are watching for the chance to capitalize for their own profit the pleasure desires of society and to reap a financial harvest without regard to the ruin they may work in the social order. Corrupt dance halls, road houses, saloons, dives of all kinds, have for their only public argument the legitimate wish of people for pleasure, sometimes even called happiness. The reply to that argument is not the denial of the right of people in God's world to be happy, but the denial that anything rightly called happiness can come out of such enterprises. The weakness of most cheap plans for

putting joy into life is shown in the necessity for strengthening the potion constantly; the plans do not satisfy, they only inflame. Professor James Moffat of Mansfield College, Oxford, reminds us that "hardly anything in our nature is more characteristic than what we choose to laugh at or the tone in which we laugh. If there is anything vulgar or coarse or vain or sour or malicious lying in our hearts, it will be apt to come out in our laughter." The Senior week number of the *Cornell Widow* (1916) asked returning alumni at commencement to laugh about other things than drinking and escapades of the lower sort. A good college theme would be, "The Moral Significance of Laughter."

But all of these mistaken ways of finding joy simply deepen the responsibility of those who love men for seeing to it that provision is made in the social group and in the social order for happiness as well as for comfort and prosperity. Happiness cannot be made a direct concern of the whole life. It would pall on any spirit if it occupied all the attention. Much of the happiness of life must be found in the work that men do. Conditions must be created, are being created rapidly, under which work can bring joy and not mere burden. Meredith in his Letters (vol. II, p. 478) wrote a friend: "I have lived long enough to see that our chief agonizer and thwarter is impatience. One of the prettiest spectacles to me is a costermonger's donkey going blithely at a trot. Our maxim should be, Merry in harness—while we have to serve." It is well put. *Doing our bit in the world is the most joyous part of life, and when a man has to leave his task to have a good time something is wrong with the way he fits into his task or with the method required for the task.* Increasingly that is being recognized in the great industries, factories, stores, offices. It is an instance of the place that praise has in a sound social order, for praise is only the recognition of our joys as the gift of God.

Also it is necessary that provision be made for happiness arising outside of our tasks. Movements in this regard are notable in our day. Cities are providing for the pleasure of the people, concerts open to the poorest are brightening the lives of many, art collections are no longer shut out from them, playgrounds are making the child life of cities and towns happier. Meanwhile hundreds of young men and women are finding a life task in thinking out the problems of

happiness for whole communities or for groups within the social order. And all it needs to make it wholly acceptable and beautiful is that we who know the God who made and keeps the world shall keep him in the minds of ourselves and others, letting our happiness lead us to praise. A joyous social order is the only order which can be worthy of the faith which we profess.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Take up more fully the attitude which Christian believers ought to take toward discoveries or theories in physical science which seem to contradict important items of religious faith. There can be warfare between scientists and theologians; why can there not be warfare between science and religion?

Discuss the best methods of dealing with cynicism, especially with men who pride themselves on being cynical. Look up the Greek origin of the word itself.

Has the Church a duty to substitute worthy means of pleasure if it feels it must oppose unworthy ones? If so, does it imply that dance halls and billiard rooms should be provided in church buildings?

Work out a principle governing the use of the Sabbath for pleasure. Does it help you here to make a distinction between pleasure and happiness? For which is the Sabbath intended?

CHAPTER XII

The Spirit of Prayer in the Social Order

DAILY READINGS

Twelfth Week, First Day

It is well to begin any thought of prayer with the fact that it is addressed to some one. No man will ever pray sincerely unless he counts God trustworthy. If God's word does not mean much to himself, it certainly cannot mean much to us. Or if God does not take us and our needs seriously, we cannot pray with any spirit. This gives force to the saying that God has magnified his word above everything else in his revelation of himself.

I will give thee thanks with my whole heart:
Before the gods will I sing praises unto thee.
I will worship toward thy holy temple,
And give thanks unto thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth:
For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
In the day that I called thou answeredst me,
Thou didst encourage me with strength in my soul.
All the kings of the earth shall give thee thanks, O Jehovah,
For they have heard the words of thy mouth.
Yea, they shall sing of the ways of Jehovah;
For great is the glory of Jehovah.

—Psalm 138: 1-5.

We say that some men's word is as good as their bond. In social relations only such men have any value. In spiritual

relations only a God whose word is the securest fact about him will command our prayers. When a sceptical man tried to unsettle an old woman's trust in God for her future safety by asking her what she would do if she found herself in hell after all, she replied that it could not make half the difference to her that it would make to God, for in that case his word would have been broken and the loss of her soul would be a small thing compared to that. One of the first social values of prayer is that it tends to keep alive in us the assurance of the reliability of God. We find as we practice it that we are using precedents and assurances based on what we know of him. Apply the same principle to the relation a body of students hold to the authorities of the college. If they believe them to be reliable and trustworthy, does it not tend to increase their readiness to present to them needs which ought to be supplied? And does it not also tend to strengthen the bonds of the college group? Can there be a social order not founded on mutual trust?

Twelfth Week, Second Day

For though Jehovah is high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly;
But the haughty he knoweth from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me;
Thou wilt stretch forth thy hand against the wrath of mine enemies,
And thy right hand will save me.
Jehovah will perfect that which concerneth me:
Thy lovingkindness, O Jehovah, endureth for ever;
Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

—Psalm 138: 6-8.

Here appears one of the social values of prayer, in taking away the weakening sense of inferiority. Being poor is not hard to bear; it is feeling poor that hurts. Holding a lowly position is not hard; it is the feeling of humiliation in being there that is hard. *No social order can be sound or final when it rests on the degradation of any of its individuals.* Of course the humble work of the world must be done. There is dirty work that cannot yet be avoided by everybody. As the story of "The Servant in the House" suggests, drains

must be cleaned and danger of disease must be run by some people for the sake of the whole. Perhaps some day there may be much less of such work required; possibly machinery may do away with it all. But we have no near corrective for the whole of it. Men in the necessary lowly positions must be helped in some other way. That way is to develop in them a sense of intrinsic worth, of assured place in the general scheme. Prayer will do that if it is given a chance, for it shows how purely incidental the differences are, and how certainly the God who is over all has respect to the lowly. This same influence would keep the man who knows he is in high place from arrogance or haughtiness. Over against the God of the whole plan and over against the whole plan itself, human places are not on such different levels. All are high, since the plan is high; all who occupy the places should be humble, for the plan is the great thing after all.

Twelfth Week, Third Day

If prayer did nothing more than put courage into a man it would have tremendous social value. Cowardice has crippled more plans for social betterment than any other one weakness. Men have been afraid of the bad results for themselves, the enemies they might raise up, the perils to causes of which they were fond. What is the explanation of the frequent consent to help a cause of reform on condition that one's name be not used? Jesus's own cause went more slowly during his lifetime on earth because some men were his disciples "but secretly for fear of the Jews" (John 19: 38). So long as we draw our sense of security from the relation we hold to our fellows, we will not be ready to take our stand against them even though they are wrong. Prayer gives us a sense of larger, higher safety. It is wholly compatible with vigorous daring and attack on evil. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28: 1), is as true here as anywhere. The praying man flees—to God. When Cromwell's soldiers were seen to fall on their knees in prayer just before an attack, royalist leaders thought it a sign of fear, but their superiors told them they were mistaken, that such men would be all the more dangerous when they had prayed.

Deliver me, O Jehovah, from mine enemies:
I flee unto thee to hide me.
Teach me to do thy will;
For thou art my God:
Thy Spirit is good;
Lead me in the land of uprightness.
Quicken me, O Jehovah, for thy name's sake:
In thy righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.
And in thy lovingkindness cut off mine enemies,
And destroy all them that afflict my soul;
For I am thy servant.

—Psalm 143: 9-12.

Two parts of this reading seem to conflict; the first really safeguards the other. Can a man with the spirit of prayer, asking to do God's will because God's spirit is good. go on to ask that his enemies be cut off or destroyed? At any rate, the difficulty for most of us would be to keep the true spirit of prayer with such a wish. With such a spirit, taught by our Lord, we can pray for our enemies, for their forgiveness, their correction, rather than for their destruction.

Twelfth Week, Fourth Day

O Lord, open thou my lips;
And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.
For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

—Psalm 51: 15-17.

Prayer helps to get moral values adjusted. This 51st psalm is evidently the result of sorrow over some great wrong the writer has done, and it is the moral evil of it that is uppermost in his mind. As happens with every man who sees a sin for what it is, he knows that something needs to be done to clear it out of the way. Waving the hand and dismissing it never works in serious moods. Easy treatment of wrong does not get the social order forward. Laying the whole matter before God as one has to do in prayer tends to clear the issues and to show the way out. It makes clear to us that it is not things God wants, but men and men of a

certain sort. Something within us rises to protest when we let any thing or any act be substituted for ourselves in our religious lives. If prayer is anything at all, it is the contact of our spirits with God's spirit and it is unthinkable that things, sacrifices of any sort, can take the place of that contact.

What is a broken spirit in view of evils? We generally speak regretfully of a man when we call him broken-spirited. The saying here must be set over against the Bible hints of stubbornness and hardness of spirit. Illustrate it in your experience of a college student who has disgraced the honor of his college in some way and wants to come back into good standing: he must not be cowed or whipped in spirit; what would a broken and contrite spirit mean in such a case?

Twelfth Week, Fifth Day

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation:
Oh deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
For thou art the God of my strength; why hast thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me:
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And to thy tabernacles.
Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy;
And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the help of my countenance, and my God.
—Psalm 43.

Prayer puts cheer into the spirit of the man who prays and therein it has large social value. Depressed men do not get things done. A saying is that God can do nothing with a discouraged man, but fortunately that says it much too strongly. Only, it is true that the first thing needed is to cheer up a discouraged man. Teachers know that sometimes a student gets blue over a course without any good reason, and so long as he stays blue he cannot do good work

in it. Leaders of community work find that helpers who think nothing is coming out of their projects soon become ineffective. We have already noticed that this little 43rd psalm was originally part of the 42nd psalm, for the closing verses occur twice in that psalm, a recurring refrain suggesting a recurring mood of depression driven away by recurring prayer and faith in God. Many good men have had that experience and there was probably never a bit of good work done on a college campus or in a community without periods when its doers felt that they could not go on. There is a depression that settles down on our spirits at times unaccountably. Sometimes it is physical and can be dealt with physically; nerves "play out" at times and need rest. Sometimes it is deeper than physical. In both cases, it helps to cheer us up to remember the interest of God in us and our enterprises.

Twelfth Week, Sixth Day

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;
Thou that sittest above the cherubim, shine forth.
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up thy might,
And come to save us.
Turn us again, O God;
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.
—Psalm 80: 1-3.

This whole 80th psalm is a cry of distress because of some national condition which cannot now be determined. Several times it suggests that the cause of the trouble may be in some bad condition within the nation itself, and it expresses a sincere readiness to be corrected if that is the case. That is always the honest position to take. In a moral order, it cannot be expected that evil conditions in a social group shall go unnoticed. Augustine once wrote: "It is in Thy order, O Lord, that all irregularities of mind should carry their own punishment along with them." If a nation is wrong, it may be expected that the wrong will carry its punishment with it. Whenever a social group fails to advance as it should, or if it is undergoing peculiar difficulty, the first question of its members who care must be regard-

ing itself. Is it worth keeping alive? We always suspect the man whose discharge from position after position is always someone else's fault. Let him look to himself first. What shall be said in reply to a student who declares that no teacher in the school likes him or is fair to him?

Prayer is a true emergency relief under such conditions. It forces a man to take honest stock of himself. But it also drives him back to God for the help he needs. The thought of God as a shepherd occurs several times, notably in the 23rd psalm, and it carries with it the assurance of his really doing things for the people who trust him. If we do not think he will do things, we will not pray very much. The value of prayer as a spiritual exercise is very great, and it is worth while for that alone, but few men are able to practice it with any earnestness simply on that basis.

Twelfth Week, Seventh Day

Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion;
And unto thee shall the vow be performed.
O thou that hearest prayer,
Unto thee shall all flesh come.
Iniquities prevail against me:
As for our transgressions, thou wilt forgive them.
Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee,
That he may dwell in thy courts:
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, Thy holy temple.
By terrible things thou wilt answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation,
Thou that art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, And of them that are afar off upon the sea.

—Psalm 65: 1-5.

Prayer ought to widen the social horizon. In thought of God and his readiness to help, we think more easily of "all flesh," "all the ends of the earth," "them that are afar off upon the sea." There are personal prayers that are wholly legitimate, but not if they exclude other men from our desire for blessing. When Jesus said that he prayed not for the world but for those whom God had given him out of the world (John 17: 9), he yet prayed that they might be left in the world (John 17: 15) and soon revealed why he wanted

them left—for the sake of their mission to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). An old believer once said that while she liked the 23rd psalm, she liked the 46th better, because it was plural and called God *our* refuge and strength while the 23rd called him *my* shepherd. Is there anything in that, as you see it? The conditions on which any man finds help from God are open to all men. He needs to be forgiven and so do they; he trusts God's lovingkindness and so must they. All that makes God helpful to one class in society makes him helpful to all classes. He is not the enemy of rich or poor, ignorant or learned. In the thought of him the social horizon broadens to take in all men.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

We are not concerned in this study with the philosophy of prayer nor with objections to it. Students of the subject who are troubled over such phases are advised to go over the little book by Dr. Fosdick, "The Meaning of Prayer," and the one by Nolan Rice Best called "Beyond the Natural Order," in which the whole matter is briefly treated. A more exhaustive treatment can be found in James Hastings' larger volume on Prayer. The writers of the psalms are not bothered about such matters. Like all vigorous religious people, they practiced prayer steadily in spite of any difficulties that might be in the way. The result is that they have produced a series of psalms which are almost all prayers. "If prayer be the eye of the heart turned toward God, then each psalm is a prayer." All of them are uttered with a vivid sense of the presence and attention of God. Asleep or awake, they were still with God (139:18). "The psalter has been in the truest sense the prayerbook both of Jews and Christians. It is, in itself, to a very great extent the converse of the soul with God. It teaches us what we are to do and to be through prayer." (Perowne, "The Psalms," vol. I, p. 18.) Luther counted this the great service of the psalms, that they tell us of the words which the saints used and may still use in praying to God. Most books tell of the works of good men; this tells of their words.

Our interest at this time is with the place of prayer in the social order, what it does there, what its field is. Two

facts stand out in the psalms at this point. One is that the writers felt themselves always in the presence of God; the other that they felt themselves always in some sort of a social group. Sometimes the group was adverse and they realized the presence of God protectively; sometimes it was favorable and they realized his presence encouragingly. But they seem never to be conscious of the group without a sense of God and never to think of God without some sense of the social group. There is nothing morbid about it, no sense of strain in keeping aware of God or of men. It is simply healthy human life expressing itself in its outward and its upward connections at the same time. *Prayer was merely a natural act of counting God in when they were thinking about life.* Even in a personal psalm like the familiar 23rd, which speaks of the Lord as "my" shepherd, the social group appears in the very figure involved. A shepherd always has a flock, not a single sheep. The adverse group appears in the thought of a table spread in the midst of his enemies. There is no psalm without this double consciousness of God and the social group or the whole social order. Our daily readings have suggested several social values that such an attitude toward life would have.

I

One element of its force would be *in its steadying one's own life.* The most familiar verse about prayer in the whole book is the one that says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (66:18), which emphasizes this value. Before a man can feel any power in prayer he must come with an open heart, himself thoroughly square with God. As they say in the law courts, he must come with clean hands when he accuses any other man of having stained hands. Meredith, in "Beauchamp's Career," makes Dr. Shrapnel speak of the fact that many who pray for no gift yet

> "have cleansing in prayer,
> And free from impurities towerlike stand."

If a man is to stand in the presence of the Lord, he need not be perfect, but he must be sincere, one who has not lifted

up his soul unto emptiness nor sworn deceitfully (24:4). Goethe tells in Faust of the unrest of Margaret when Mephistopheles was near. She did not know who he was, but something in her pure soul detected evil and she told Faust that his presence chilled her blood. She brings her suspicion to its climax in declaring:

"Besides, when he is near, I ne'er could pray."

Shakespeare uses the same idea when he tells of Macbeth's return from the murder of Duncan, telling Lady Macbeth of the two servants who in their sleep had murmured "God bless us!" and he could not say Amen. She bids him not think of it. He cannot dismiss it:

"But wherefore could not I pronounce, amen?
I had most need of blessing and amen
Stuck in my throat."

And the same thought appears in the familiar soliloquy of the murderous king in Hamlet who feels a curse upon him and knows he cannot truly repent his sin and yet retain the profits of it:

"Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent."

Keeping ourselves able to pray keeps us also ready for the tasks of the social order, keeps our own lives steadied and braced for service.

That same steadying influence of prayer appears in the demand praying makes that our spirit be kept right when we face those who oppose us. It is noticeable that in war times, when national enemies are much in mind, sermons or orations are always more vitriolic than prayers. With our fellowmen we can be denunciatory of other people, and it is possible to get so assured of the righteousness of our cause that we can pray for its victory. But when we approach God in prayer, denunciations are not so easy, and, specially under the influence of our Christian thinking, we fall to praying for the success of our cause for the sake of our enemies as well as for our own sakes. In the European war men have talked of hating each other, but when they have prayed, they have not been so belligerent; or if they have, all men

who looked on knew that they had missed the deepest note of prayer. It is here we find the largest difficulty with the psalms of imprecation or cursing; at some points they are not in our Christian spirit; in so far as they call for personal vengeance on evil doers because of personal injuries, they are not Christian at all. But it is something to notice that prayer turns the enemy over to God and does not suggest the least desire to take the vengeance one's self. In the saddest psalms is the assurance that if these enemies were in any need, the injured one would be swift to help (141: 5; 35: 13, 14).

Great social movements do not prosper under leadership of men who grow bitter and denunciatory even when they feel deeply. Keeping God in mind, his patience which outlasts our imagination, his blessing even on men who are unworthy, so that sun and rain come to just and unjust alike, (Matt. 5:45), the sure outcome of his plans which no evil of men can finally defeat, so that their best efforts are only amusing (2: 4)—all this will steady the life of any man who wants to take his place helpfully in the social order. Tennyson says that after the heroic self-sacrifice of Enoch Arden:

> "He was not all unhappy. His resolve
> Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
> Prayer from a living source within the will,
> And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
> Like fountains of sweet waters in the sea,
> Kept him a living soul."

The task of helping in the social order is not easy; it has its bitter taste as well as its inspiring sweetness. If men are to take their places without wavering and weakening, they must keep in touch with the power of God.

II

Another element of social value in prayer is *its broadening of one's horizon.* The God who hears prayer is one to whom "all flesh" can come (65: 2). There have been good men who kept narrow horizons in their thinking, but it has been in spite of their prayer. They have not prayed much or else they have not prayed with understanding. The great

advance movements, the great achievements, have come with that widening of horizon which usually grows out of renewed assurance of God. But the widening life, little as it may have to do with great movements, has grown by the same assurance. Remember again the word of Browning in "Saul," that David did not come to the test of Saul's need unprepared, for though he had been only a shepherd lad, he had tried to think big thoughts and to push back his horizon constantly even in his narrow field. So, when the demand came, there came with it great thoughts.

Most of our problems are helped by being lifted into larger connections. Social cures are generally conceived on too narrow a basis. We tend to cure symptoms instead of causes —as though on a campus a particular misdeed were magnified to such dimensions that we should not try to find out the spirit that might be pervading the whole college and finding expression in the one deed. Cheating in examination is not the bad thing, mean as it is; far worse is the spirit of a student body that does not care about such things, whose nerve of integrity is cut or deadened. There is no cure for cheating while that spirit rules.

Men who pray widely and honestly cannot long take narrow views of evil, nor think it makes no difference. To a man who knows this to be a world from which God can be reached, the presence of evils here is monstrous. They carry with them widespread results to which he cannot be indifferent. And just thinking them out in the presence of God helps to show the way of correction. A student once brought a serious difficulty of life to an instructor of whose interest he was sure and whose questions as the story proceeded gave the problem definite outlines. When the tale was done, the instructor said, "It is a big question, my dear fellow, and I fear I cannot help you much with it." "Help me!" the other exclaimed, "why, you've helped me immensely already; just telling you has made it seem clearer and I think I see myself what I ought to do." Many a man could testify that just telling a situation over in the presence of God has seemed to clear it up. Nothing has happened, yet his prayer for guidance has been answered and duty has grown clear. You cannot miss that tone in these psalms. They are the cries of perplexed men, but almost without exception before the cry is ended it has turned into praise

and assurance of God's hand in the troublesome matter. Even when the mood of depression recurs, as in Psalms 42 and 43, the assurance recurs also.

Of immense value also is this widening of horizon in its taking away cheap class spirit from our thinking. Animosities between social groups are hurtful to the whole social order. Rich and poor, laborer and capitalist, American and foreigner, aristocrat and plebeian, will do for convenient terms of speech; they will kill any prayer. When we approach a great God we must learn to think wide thoughts. The more destructive forms of socialism on the one side and of capitalism on the other are contemptuous of religion. They must be if they think of their own interests in terms of the overthrow of other people.

III

Another element of social value in prayer is *in its maintaining courage for largest attempts.* There is always danger in our saying so much about the value of little things in life and of small services of helpfulness that we overlook the necessity for many big things that must be attempted by men who have the courage for them. There is a cheap little song that says "the world is dying for a little bit of love." That is more nearly what the world is dying *of,* than *for.* What it really needs is a tremendous deal of love, the outgo of hearts that know no limit to their sacrifice. If small things are all we can do, then they are the big things of life for us. But the big things are not less needed, and our lives get their main strength from being linked up to big attempts that are being made for the good of men. We could make those attempts in a spirit of dogged devotion to duty, saying to ourselves that nothing can come of them, of course, but that we can die trying. *And certainly it is better to fail in the effort to do something thoroughly worth while than to succeed in doing a thing that is not worth while anyway.* But we need not make any such choice.

Prayer puts courage into a man. When he cries to God, He encourages him with strength in his soul (138:3). When we wonder that God does not correct social evils, we are forgetting that he does much better by the social order in

making a group of men brave enough and strong enough to face and deal with an evil than in removing it by a miracle. When we ask the Lord to provide, his answer often is, "I have provided, and you are the provision!" In a sound social order men are more important than institutions, for they can make any kind of institutions if they are right themselves. The only reason great corrective measures do not start earlier is that the man big enough and brave enough and sure enough of God does not appear. When he comes, things move. So much of Carlyle's philosophy of history is right.

These psalmists had no notion that anything is too hard for God or that any evil thing has to be put up with (34:16; 37:1, 2; 76:10). They knew how deeply evil is rooted in human nature (51:5), but it was no impossible thing in their eyes for God to change human nature where it had gone wrong (51:7; 139:23, 24). Social evils always root somewhere in human nature and there are men who lie down as soon as they see that fact, declaring that they cannot then be corrected. Men always have drunk, always have been impure, always have gambled; therefore they always will do so. And to make that a sound syllogism we have to put in another premise to the effect that what always has been always must be. Men who know God well enough to trust him challenge that premise on the instant. *There is no evil of any sort in the social order that is to be accepted as a finality to which the order must regretfully adjust itself.* All evils are doomed in the appearance of a group of men with courage enough to make big attempts for God and men.

Prayer demands that we be worthy of it ourselves. The Rabbis said that without mention of the kingdom "a prayer is not a prayer." All real prayer needs a background of a great purpose. Petty praying gets to be mere talk before long. When Theodore Lee was asked about his decision for the mission field, he said that he could not very well fail to put his life to some large uses when at the family altar at home his father always prayed for the kingdom of Christ and its extension. An atmosphere was formed in which petty plans were impossible. As a Christian man, are you expecting great things for your community, the correction of its evils, the cure of its plague spots, or have you learned the sad lingo about traditions which it is no use to try to correct?

That is, are you a man sure enough of God to dare big things for him, or are you afraid to be daring in his interest?

IV

Prayer has a social value also *in the actual achievements which it makes possible.* This is not the place to enter into the argument about the effectiveness of prayer in gaining results. The books mentioned at the opening of the study present it fully. Enough now to say that if men do not believe that prayer is worth while in making some things possible that would not be possible without it, they will not long pray with any earnestness. They do not dictate the time of answer, for there is an acceptable time which may be trusted to God's lovingkindness (69:13), but they believe that their prayer does rise to God as an incense, finding favor there (141:2), and bringing things to pass. It introduces into the situation further spiritual forces, which violate no natural forces, but direct their action so that they accomplish what otherwise they would not do. This is no more mysterious to a man who believes in a personal God than the operation of any request he makes of a fellow man to do something in the natural order whereby results come which would not have occurred but for that request and that service. Prayer engages these highest spiritual forces. It is not foolish but very wise, for a group of men who want something accomplished on a campus or in a community to band themselves together in prayer for it. Results are achieved by it which could not come without it. That is part of the social power of prayer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

The pros and cons of group prayer meetings, as of college classes, fraternities, bands,—their value to the group itself? Their value to the whole order of which the group is part? How can such meetings be kept thoroughly sincere?

Sometimes it is suggested that the midweek meeting of the church should be abandoned. Under what conditions can this be approved? What losses might be expected?

CHAPTER XIII

The Forecast of a Future Social Order

There is no mistaking the forward look of the psalms. Open your Bible to any page of these songs and count the future tenses of the verbs. Sometimes the expectation is personal, as in the 23rd and other psalms. Generally it is strongly social. It took in the nation, or all those that fear Jehovah or all the righteous. Something better is always before these writers. We speak of that hope as Messianic, meaning by it not simply that an anointed leader and king was to come, but that with him a new and corrected social order was to come also. Dr. Briggs in his book on Messianic Prophecy refers to sixty-four of the psalms as having one or more references to the Messiah and the new order which he was to inaugurate.

DAILY READINGS

Thirteenth Week, First Day

It is easy enough to be hopeful for a good social order in the future if you do not let yourself think of the forces that are against it. One large body of people today are trying to keep cheerful by refusing to let their minds dwell on disturbing facts. The working motto of other people is, "Forget it!" Within limits such policies are feasible. But they are not very courageous, and they leave one wilted when the adverse facts finally break through and demand to be noticed. The truth is that there are no easy paths to a better future. The new social order "which eager hearts expect" has plenty of forces operating against it in the order that now obtains.

Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah, and against his anointed, saying,
Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh:
The Lord will have them in derision.
Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure:
Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion. —Psalm 2: 1-6.

No one ever tried to improve conditions anywhere without finding plenty of people to whom present conditions are wholly satisfying. The clearing out of tenement slums is never easy because they are productive of revenue on the one hand and are homelike to the inhabitants on the other. The new proposals always seem like new bondage which must be resisted. "Reformers always kill business" is a truism with those who oppose them. But the movement goes on for all that. Opposition is petty at its strongest. It may overcome our plans and defeat our programs, but it cannot stop the moral forces of the universe and they are on the side of the movement for a better social order.

Thirteenth Week, Second Day

I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
Now therefore be wise, O ye kings:
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
Serve Jehovah with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way,
For his wrath will soon be kindled.
Blessed are all they that take refuge in him.
—Psalm 2: 7-12.

Ruin or compliance with the advancing order—that may seem a harsh alternative, but it is the natural, inevitable one. It is in the moral order only the familiar law of life in the natural order. Animals must find some way of adjusting themselves to a changed environment or perish. Institutions must continue to serve the need of men under their changed conditions or cease to be. In recent years American colleges have made many changes in the effort to adapt themselves to the needs of changed social demands. Society cannot allow itself to be forever encumbered with dead material even though it was once alive. The coming Messiah spoken of in the 2nd psalm is to be God's king, whose reign will have no limit. The nations and the uttermost parts of the earth belong to him. As his reign extends, it makes the new conditions which all nations must meet if they are to continue. It is not the hope or wish of the writer of this psalm, nor of any man who loves the coming kingdom, that any should perish. He wants all kings, judges, leaders of the earth, to learn the new order and adjust themselves to it. The expression, "kiss the son," only means to do homage, to recognize the right of the son as king on the throne. And the last line of the psalm takes away the sting of the seemingly harsh words that go before. The only refuge from God is in God. We flee from him by fleeing to him. The kingdoms of the world are not marked for destruction but for subjection. Our hearts are marked in the same way.

Thirteenth Week, Third Day

The coming social order, the kingdom of heaven on earth, is not to come as an arbitrary, forced victory. It will come by the power of God and through the rule of Christ, it is true; but its method is the service of a voluntary people who offer themselves willingly in a day when they know God's power.

Jehovah saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
Thy people offer themselves willingly
In the day of thy power, in holy array:

Out of the womb of the morning
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.

—Psalm 110: 1-3.

The time comes in national history when the draft must be used to get men for the emergent demands of a war. Even then it is hoped by all thoughtful statesmen that the drafted men will respond willingly when their turn comes. A dragging soldiery is defeated before it begins the fight. In social warfare it is peculiarly true that only willing people who offer themselves can render the best service. When they are salaried, as many social workers must be, it is never like day laborers who watch the clock. Their salaries are not to reward them for their work; they are only to enable them to live while they work. Ministers, teachers, social service workers, and all the group whose special business it is to advance the forces of the new social order, are on the same basis of return. They know no hours of labor, nor limitation of responsibility. If they should be found balancing work against pay, they would be counted failures at once.

The new social order calls for the gift of increasing numbers of selves not for service in the distinctive group alone, but even more for the ordinary, every-day life of all men who have the forward look. There is no right mode of living which is not also a call to service. The better order does not advance without enemies, but in the midst of them, and not by sweeping them away, but by subduing them to the new order. And the advance of the forces of that order is not chaotic, but in "array," in order and organization. Merely good spirit, willingness to help, will not take the place of reason and the cooperation of forces.

Thirteenth Week, Fourth Day

In his days shall the righteous flourish,
And abundance of peace, till the moon be no more. . . .
Yea, all kings shall fall down before him;
All nations shall serve him.
For he will deliver the needy when he crieth,
And the poor, that hath no helper.
He will have pity on the poor and needy,
And the souls of the needy he will save.

—Psalm 72: 7, 11-13.

By all accounts this is a psalm of the coming Messiah. No doubt it was first applied to the king then reigning or coming into power on the Jerusalem throne of David, but its hopes overstate the possibility of that king or of any other who ever sat on that throne. It may be a prayer that all these things may come to be true of the king, but even then it is prayer that works on to an expectation. Only in a new social order, under the reign of a King greater than any man, could the expectation of the psalm be fulfilled. *And it is well to notice that the new social order is to be fundamentally moral: righteousness is to flourish and peace in abundance on that basis. Can there be any effective arrangement for peace until that basis is established?*

The social order that makes provision for unfairness must some day give way to one that refuses to do so. Christ's claim to world mastery is not arbitrary, but rests on the ground of the social order which he proposes. In that order, kings and all that upper level of authoritative folk whom every order has, will realize that they are themselves under a higher power and will wield their power as subjects. Nations will serve each other because they serve a common Lord, by an application of that spiritual mathematics wherein two men serving the same Lord serve each other. And in that order, the under levels have their chance. The poor and the needy count in it and are helped through it. The new social order will be for all and all will be for it. Are you helping to bring this kind of social order?

Thirteenth Week, Fifth Day

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah;
And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
For the kingdom is Jehovah's;
And he is the ruler over the nations.
All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and worship;
All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him,
Even he that cannot keep his soul alive.
A seed shall serve him;
It shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation.
They shall come and shall declare his righteousness
Unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done it.
—Psalm 22: 27-31.

If you did not know it, you would never guess that this triumphant forecast of coming world unity and victory is taken from the psalm whose opening words Jesus quoted on the cross in the hour of his deepest agony: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (22:1; Matt. 27:46). That very fact shows how possible it is under present pressing trouble to get a clear assurance of coming victory for the forces of righteousness. If, as some think, our Lord went on through the psalm in his own mind on the cross, it is easy to see how new strength would come to him in seeing that this distress of his would be a factor, actually the largest factor, in bringing the better day. Personal distresses or the setback of good projects sometimes make us wonder if the kingdom is advancing. But they do not dethrone God nor destroy the seed that still serves him, out of whom will grow the new social order in which he will be the ruler of all.

Looking back over history is one of the surest cures of pessimism. No generation is a good judge of its own progress. Great movements are sometimes like glaciers that creep so slowly that the advance can hardly be measured by the generation. Then again they will be like the liquid in a test tube that crystallizes quickly. If we live in a rapidly moving period, it is not so difficult to keep encouraged. But in the slow periods history supplies reassurance to men of hope. Apply that to generations of students. Is it certain that those that do not seem to introduce any new movements have been ineffective in the history of the college; and are the biggest results always the outcome of slow processes?

Thirteenth Week, Sixth Day

When our sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth,
And our daughters as cornerstones hewn after the fashion of a palace;
When our garners are full, affording all manner of store,
And our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields;
When our oxen are well laden;
When there is no breaking in, and no going forth,
And no outcry in our streets:
Happy is the people that is in such a case;
Yea, happy is the people whose God is Jehovah.

—Psalm 144:12-15.

It is sometimes said that the Hebrew idea of a good time yet to come or of a social order yet to be realized, is too physical, too temporal, makes too much of worldly comforts and prosperity. Perhaps so. But a social order which does not make much of these things will never be worth forming in this world. Contempt for them is sheer pretense. If we do not prefer good clothing and food and an adequate supply of both, we ought to. Bloated wealth, foolish extravagance, silly outlay, we ought to despise. But if we count this world God's world and look on its evil as out of place, sin as an interloper which ought to be put out, terribly real as it still is; if we follow Jesus in his joy in the lilies and the birds as evidences of a Father's care; if we feel that in a world so rich with the things that human life needs it is a shame that human lives should be impoverished—we will not refuse our interest to any phase of social betterment which looks toward temporal improvement.

It is a wise prayer in Prov. 30:8, 9, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," not poverty lest one grow bitter and dishonest with it, nor riches lest one grow self-satisfied and forget God. In a sound social order it is necessary that all have enough; it is not at all necessary that anybody have too much. Crops and manufactures have a real religious interest, not because they are final indexes of social soundness, but because without them the social order cannot be sound. The duty of men who take a large view of the coming order is to see that temporal things do not get into first place. The kingdom itself must have that place, with righteousness; after that, all things can be added to us (Matt. 6:33).

Thirteenth Week, Seventh Day

For Jehovah hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for his habitation.
This is my resting-place for ever:
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
I will abundantly bless her provision:
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
Her priests also will I clothe with salvation;
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
There will I make the horn of David to bud:
I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

His enemies will I clothe with shame;
But upon himself shall his crown flourish.
—Psalm 132: 13-18.

This psalm is one of the "songs of ascent," probably intended for use in the journey to the annual feast at Jerusalem. Each of them renews the impression of the importance of Zion as the place of desire. Zion is the geographical incarnation for all the world of *the contact of God with men*. The new social order is not to make less but rather more of Zion. Religion will grow to be a broader, deeper reality, under whose influence men will know God better. That movement is already going on. The faith of the Church in Christ, so far from making God less real, is making him mean more. Furthermore, the new order comes by use of the social agencies among men. New agencies will develop, but the heart of them will be the familiar religious forces which bind men to God. In the most vivid prefiguring of the final social order in the Bible, in the two closing chapters of the Revelation, it is said that the first impression of the city coming down out of heaven from God is the clear sense of God which its people have. He dwells among them and is their God and they realize themselves to be his people (Rev. 21: 3). It is a tradition that when Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton was asked what was the most attractive word about heaven in these chapters, he said, "'And his servants shall serve him'—at last!" (Rev. 22: 3). But that is not reserved for heaven; indeed, it is given as one of the facts of the new order which is being formed here in the spirit of heaven. Whenever any man helps another to serve God, to be loyal to all that Zion means, he is advancing the new social order by that much.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

The future of the psalms is not heaven, but transformed earth. To be sure, nothing in them precludes thought of heaven for the individual. Probably too much has been made of the supposed lack of a sense of a future state in the Old Testament. The idea appears in many forms actually (16: 10; 49: 15), and something could be said of the assurance of personal immortality as a social factor. Life cannot look the

same if it is ended at seventy years instead of being continued in another state; as college would not be the same if students did not think of it as preparation for following life. But certainly the main outlook of the psalms is toward a new and glorious and rectified social order which would fit into the order of the present time, growing out of it by the operation of the forces of righteousness. The minor prophets lay stress on social wrongs as calling for personal correction; bad men must cease to oppress. The psalmists lay larger stress on personal wrongs issuing from the social order which must be corrected by changing the order. In the new order, when God is given the power among men which is his by right, earth will yield its increase and righteousness will be the rule of life (85:12, 13). Temporal prosperity and moral vigor will go together.

I

In the minds of the writers there is no shadow of doubt of the coming of this better time. They are sometimes baffled by its delay and wonder at the slow movement of God toward its coming (74:10; 77:7-9), but even then they rebuke themselves for anxiety (37:1-17; 73:1-22; 77:10-13). Short views may discourage, but long views correct the discouragement. God is not a man that he should be in haste. There were baffling cases of failure, and the exile psalms face the greatest of them with peculiar courage. They continue to be sure of the power of God. Zion was destroyed, but the servants of God took pleasure in her stones and had pity on her dust (102:13-17) and the time for God's favor was sure to come soon. There is the same feeling with which Lowell faced the crisis of his times, when so many institutions and hopes were destroyed:

"Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold; Wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

There are conditions in our own times that call for strong

faith. Weak men can lose courage. Professor Giddings may be right in saying that "we are witnessing today beyond question the decay—perhaps not permanent, but at any rate the decay—of republican institutions. No man in his right mind can deny it." If he is right, then our faith in the coming order is put to the test, for most of us in America think that republican institutions mark progress toward that order. But no one can take the long view, from the times of the psalmists to our own, and not see the emergence of conditions of promise; and no one can keep alive his trust in God and his plan for the new order without being patient to work and wait for its coming. Professor McFadyen says: "Whatever the fate of the earthly monarchy might be, Israel always felt herself to be under the sovereignty of an invisible king, and however the dreams of an earthly kingdom might be dashed by the hard facts, the kingdom of Jehovah was sure to come." ("Messages of the Psalmists," p. 281.) The coming of Christ with his fuller revelation of God and his purpose for the world ought to make us even more sure of the coming victory.

II

Nor was this reign of God and righteousness to be counted merely future. It had already begun. The Lord reigneth and that may mean rejoicing (97:1) or trembling (99:1), but the fact is there to be dealt with. He is King over nature (29:10) and over bad men (2:1-5), indeed he rules over all (103:19). This is a basal fact with which their thinking begins. *What is needed is not something new but more of the best that now is.*

Moreover, anyone who will look carefully enough will see the new order coming in the present apparent chaos. It appears in the order of nature. The heavens declare God's glory and also his righteousness (19:1; 97:6). His righteousness finds a good illustration in the mountains (36:6), the most enduring element in the nature which the writers knew. It is as fixed as they are. Dr. Newman Smyth, in his book, "The Meaning of Personal Life," has urged that nature shows signs of a program which it is carrying out. "The electrons have come to do something—they are here that more may be." "The earth in its final forming has the appearance of some vast assembling room of well fitted

parts." He finds the purpose in the emergence of personal life which gives nature its real meaning. Everything in nature has a forward look, is working out a program. The program is from God. It is he who has given the earth to men (115:16). For a time we grew so interested in the history of the physical earth that we had no concern for its future, but we are finding that the two points of view are not contradictory. Whatever push nature has from the past is toward something in the future. We may be wholly unsure what that future thing is, but we can join the psalmists in being sure that since nature is so much the expression of law it must carry with it an assurance of the righteousness of the God whose it is.

Also it appears in every passing victory for righteousness. Whenever a bad scheme is thwarted or a good one advanced, the new order is helped forward. Clouds and darkness may be round about Him, but righteousness and justice are the very foundation of his throne (97:2). Many of the strong assertions of the sure prosperity of the righteous rest on the assurance that a fundamentally right order exists underneath the chaotic social order we now experience. Only once in a while does that fundamental order crop out, as a ledge of rock thrusts itself up through the soil at points, but when it does appear, moral beings may take heart. Emerson's essay on "Compensation" was written after hearing a sermon in which it was argued that there must be a future life to provide a moral balance for this life. On the contrary, Emerson contended that life even here is morally balanced. Both the preacher and Emerson had truth on their sides. Fundamentally the moral order underlies even the chaos of today, but its full expression waits for the future—here as soon as we will give it chance, beyond this life in any case. Even the remote heathen have had reason to know that righteousness is God's law (98:2), and little by little nations not among the chosen ones are moving toward God (72:9-11; 87:4; 68:31). Even now it is better with the man who is right and generous and helpful than with men of the old order who seek their own interest first (112).

Progress actually has been made. The good old days have something to say for themselves, but not so much as the later days whose coming they helped along. The story of the spread of the new order, hinting of its further lines,

has been told many times. *We cannot be blind to evils and fool ourselves into thinking that the social order is what it ought to be, but we must not be blind to the forces for good which are at work, overcoming evil and bringing in a kingdom which will transform human society.* Kaftan spoke well of Jesus when he said that only a paradox could state his message: "The future salvation has become present, and yet has not ceased to be future."

III

For we need to go on to say that though the new social order is emerging in the present, its fulness waits for the future. For the psalmists it waited for the coming of a King who could bring it in. The King has come and has left a program for bringing it in which we are trying to execute. We say much of loyalty to the past and something of loyalty to our own times and their demands on us. We do not say enough of the largest loyalty demanded of us—loyalty to the future. Yet there is no loyalty to which we owe more passionate allegiance than this. If we are faced with the question of the politician who was urged to a large plan for the sake of posterity, "What has posterity ever done for us?" we have a ready answer. Posterity has given us our greatest opportunity. It has made it worth while to attempt big things, to lay plans greater than we can ever execute, to design programs which are worthy of our rational natures, in the assurance that there will be men to take up the task where we lay it down.

Life is a big relay race where generations touch hands before the first stops and the second goes on. President King says that each new generation asks of the former one three questions: What are you trying to do? How far have you got? What can I do to help? *As a young man, is that the way you think of life? Do you have a sense of obligation to the generation whose work you are taking up?* You will find as you come to the end of your generation that part of your reassurance will be in the next generation whose young men will take up the great projects where you leave off. Posterity demands a firm loyalty. We have no right not to plan for better things. The generation following must hear good stories from us if we do our share (48:13; 102:18).

One generation must tell of the victories of God and his advancing order to another (145:4). The coming generation makes worth while the strain it takes to change a bad social custom or to introduce some fine new observance. *It is not enough to believe that the new social order is coming; the great thing is to live our lives for the sake of its coming. Despairing of it or turning away from it for personal profit is the deepest treason.* Lowell's poem on "The Present Crisis" goes on:

"New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her campfires, we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key."

Some one looked at Lincoln as he sat, "a tall bony figure, devoid of grace, a countenance almost redeemed from plainness by two kindly blue eyes, but overshadowed by the dark problems of the moment," and after he had gone, remarked, "Helpless Honesty!" "As if honesty could ever be helpless!" comments Mrs. Howe.

Yet the real assurance of the coming of this better social order does not rise out of what we see in nature or in history or in present movements. Those might all be dead against it, and still we might have the assurance if we were like these psalmists. For their assurance is in God and his power and purpose. The promise on which they based it rested in God's character and love (89:24-37) and took frank account of the weakness of the men through whom that character had to work in the world. But a good God with good men could not fail to make a good order (125). Much of their hope gathered around a central Figure (45 and 72), but it saw him drawing nations to himself. We need not suppose that they had any clear vision of Christ, for they may be of the group of which Peter speaks (I Peter 1:11) who felt more than they understood as they wrote. But when that central Figure did appear it is noticeable that their phrases fitted him with

fine nicety. It is from the 2nd psalm that we get our two principal titles for our Lord: in the second verse he is called the "anointed," which in the Greek form is the word Christ; in the seventh verse he is called the Son. Peter put the two together in his famous confession which so touched the heart of Christ: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). It is interesting to observe that there are more quotations from the psalms in the New Testament than from any other part of the Bible. They express the Christian expectation—assured victory through the power of Christ.

IV

Few details of the future social order are given. Three are emphasized frequently. It will be a time and condition of *righteousness, peace, and prosperity*. The coming of the Lord will be to judge the earth with righteousness and the peoples with equity (98:9). There will be an end of oppression (72:4, 14) and men will receive their just dues (149:7-9). Whatever unfairness exists in the present order is a hindrance to the new order. Unequal distribution of profits of industry, unfair and cruel treatment of children, oppression of weaker nations, withholding of justice from accused criminals, arbitrary administration of law, and all else of the sort must be worked out of our social order by the coming in of the new order. Whoever loves the new social order must take his stand against all such unrighteousness. To be unloving, unfair, unjust, to take selfish advantage, to exploit a weaker person for one's profit, and yet to pretend to want the coming of the new order is to live a lie.

Because it is a reign of righteousness, it will be a reign of peace. Most of the psalms indicate at some point a sense of danger, or disturbance at least. Life is lived in the presence of peril. But all the trouble comes out of the evil of other men or else out of one's own evil. If that were once taken away and God's voice could be heard, he would be speaking peace to men (85:8; 29:11). The logic of that is clear enough. If two nations can be brought to take the same attitude of genuine loyalty to God and his rule of righteousness, there is no room for controversy between them. The new social order will make no provision for war on a large scale as between nations, nor on a small scale as between social

groups. Peace will come on earth among men of goodwill, men in whom a righteous, loving God can be well pleased (Luke 2:14). When we foster national hatreds, or racial oppositions, or encourage feelings of hatred between classes of men, or slur the merits of other men, magnifying our own, we hinder the new order.

We must not minimize the place of prosperity in the better social order. The psalms make much of it. They thought of the earth as a kind of mirror which smiled when God smiled and frowned when he frowned. They had no occasion to think of the intricate social organization that enters into our present life. That would have deepened their realization of the intimate relation between a righteous social order and the comfort and prosperity of the people who live in it. Better houses will not necessarily make better people, and rascals are quite as likely to live on boulevards as anywhere else. But there is nothing in a bad house that makes a fine soul and nothing in a good house that makes a coarse soul. There is better chance for a fine soul to be its best self in a good house, and bad houses tend to coarsen souls. Plenty of good food is the natural outcome of an abundant, rich world like this. Right industrial conditions should make it possible for every man doing his share to have the returns which he and his dependents need. A sound social order will provide care for the incapable and will put aspiration into the hearts of the indolent, whereby they take their place in the program of the whole, and will reward the active with place in the group beyond oppression and poverty. Economics has been a "dreary science," but if it is a study of the ways whereby the new social order can come, it may cease to be dreary.

V

Meanwhile, the new social order is to come by the power of God working in men (101:1-8; 110:1-3), men who will behave themselves wisely in right ways, who will take God's side against wrong, who will offer themselves willingly in the day of God's power. If we will not be that kind of men, then other men will have to carry us as additional loads as they go on toward the better future. But if we are that kind of men we help the enterprise forward,

however much or little we seem to be able to do. There is even something in the word of Bishop Blougram which we need to face:

> "When all's done and said,
> Like you this Christianity or not?
> It may be false, but will you wish it true?
> Has it your vote to be so if it can?"

But rugged old Carlyle is better at the end of his lecture "The Hero as Priest," when he is describing John Knox and his hope for Scotland and the world, that the petition, "Thy Kingdom come," should not be any longer an empty word. The regent Murray shrugged his shoulders and called it "a devout imagination" to think that a social order might be formed wherein God would rule, but John Knox was not restrained from giving his life to advancing the purpose. The lecture closes: "How far such Ideals can ever be introduced into Practice, and at what point our impatience with their non-introduction ought to begin, is always a question. I think we may say safely, Let them introduce themselves as far as they can contrive to do it! If they are the true faith of men, all men ought to be more or less impatient always where they are not found introduced. There will never be wanting Regent Murrays enough to shrug their shoulders, and say, 'A devout imagination!' We will praise the Hero-priest rather who does what is in *him* to bring them in; and wears out in toil, calumny, contradiction, a noble life, to make a God's Kingdom of this Earth. The Earth will not become too godlike." The psalmists were more sure of the outcome than was Carlyle. The fulfilment of the hope waits for men enough who will live for it. They cannot do it in their own power, but they can live in the strength and joy of the vision of the kingdom of the earth becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ (Rev. 11:15), meanwhile bearing the witness of a changed life to the uttermost parts of the earth.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Make a list of the forces or movements now visible which seem to you to indicate the advance of the social order

towards God's purpose for it, at least in the three traits of righteousness, peace, and prosperity.

Think out some safeguards against such emphasis on service for a new present order that one loses interest in the eternal phases of human lives.

This chapter is written in full view of the fact that equally earnest Christian believers differ as to the method of the coming of the ultimate social order. Some expect it to be developed gradually out of the present order, though doubtless with many forward leaps, under the power of Christ. Others expect it to be inaugurated by his personal return to earth. Consider whether difference here should affect our duty in the present social order.

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Psalms of the social life.

TITLE

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
OCT 2 '63	Hilton Hammon
NOV 20 '63	J. Duane Ly
OCT 7 '64	Robert Hoem
OCT 14 '64	renew
OCT 21 '64	renew
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